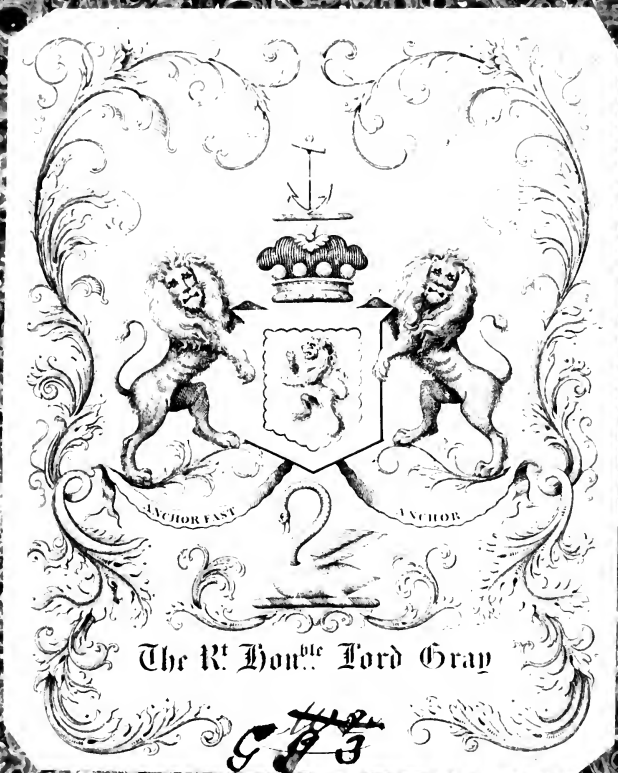




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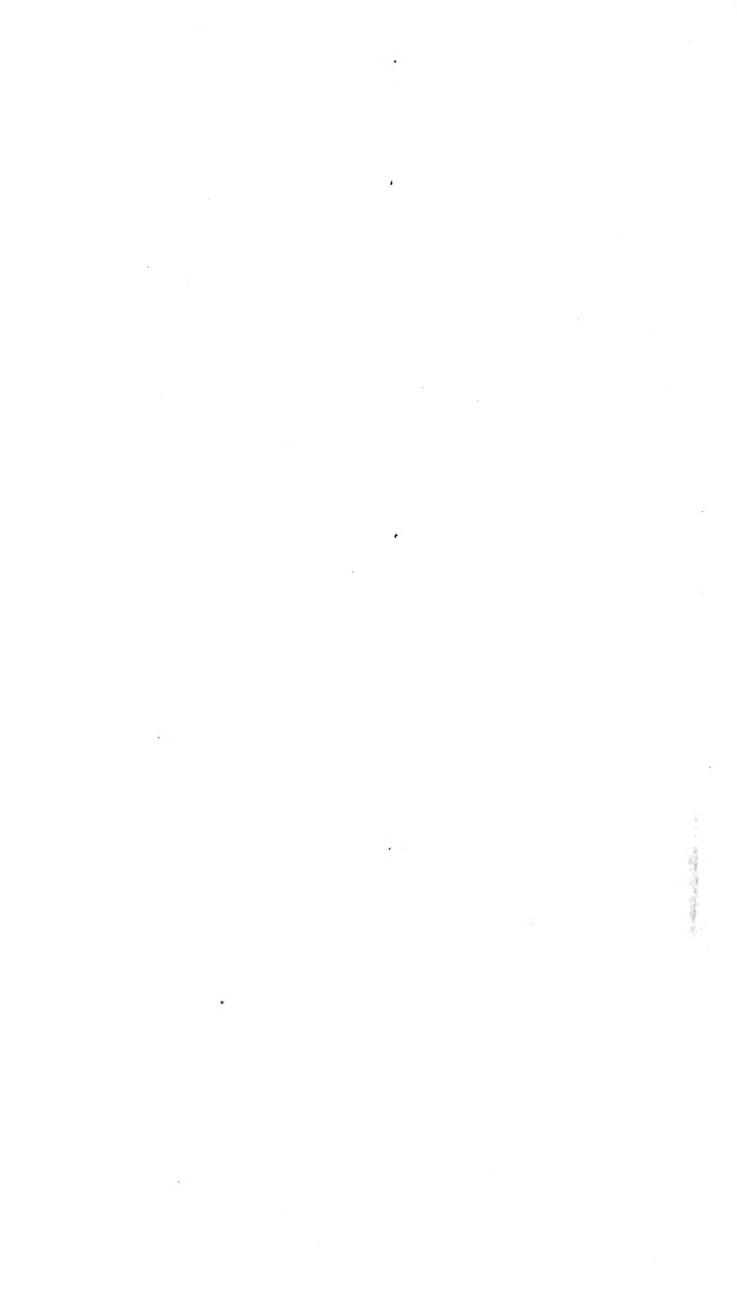
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SKETCHES

OF A

SEA PORT TOWN.

BY

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

" Thou lovest the woods, the rocks, the quiet fields,
But tell me, if thou canst, enthusiast wan,
Why the broad town to thee no gladness yields ?
If thou lov'st nature, sympathize with man—
For he and his are parts of nature's plan."

The Author of Corn Law Rhymes.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1834.

L O N D O N :
SCHULZE AND CO. 13. POLAND STREET.

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SKETCHES
OF A
SEA PORT TOWN.

THE ADVENTURES
OF THE MERCHANT BY CHANCE
CONTINUED.

PART V.
A RETURN TO WELL-KNOWN PLACES.

THAT Walter's indifference to the contents of this anonymous billet was only assumed, may have been already surmised. He had long ago entertained suspicions,—perhaps from the natural misgiving, that such a deliverance was too great a good fortune to fall upon him ;

but the lapse of time had gradually worn them away, and they had been almost forgotten, till refreshed in all their ancient force by that mysterious warning, which *might* after all, be only a joke. And yet there were many minute circumstances which, singly, were of no value, and might be accounted for as the effect of imagination—but which, in conjunction with each other, must favour the notion, that Colonel Levison was yet alive, or be ascribed at once to supernatural influence. The shadow at Mrs. Arnold's ball, the disturbances at Dale Hall, (which had been a favourite scene of his pranks and debaucheries)—though every pains to explain these away, and to discover their cause had proved ineffectual,—still it was possible that Isabella's correspondent might possess some clue for the perfect unravelling of the mystery. Yet Temple was aware that it would be a wearisome and uncertain pursuit, to attempt to discover who this correspondent might be, in a place so wide as our town, and that it would only expose his own suspicions more fully to the person or persons, whose interest it was to perplex and ensnare him. It

was not of so much consequence to find out the channel through which the intelligence was conveyed, as to ascertain whether that intelligence was true or false; and the time he could devote to such research was so short, that only one step could be taken. He had, with his usual promptitude, decided what that step should be, before he had taken leave of Isabella; and only refrained from communicating his purpose to her, because he felt that it was one wherein secrecy was of as much consequence as speed.

He made all possible haste to the office, and, in two words, informed Mr. Arnold that he *must* be absent from town for four and twenty hours; but that it was of great importance that his departure should be concealed, and most particularly from Mrs. Levison. To do this was not very difficult, as his engagements before leaving England had become so numerous, that it was not expected that his absence would be even remarked, and the arm-full of papers, which he took away with him from the office, would have been sufficient excuse, had he chosen to be invisible for a week instead of a

day. He deposited these at Mr. Arnold's, and then hastened to find Doctor Goodrich, whom it was necessary to take into confidence. By good fortune, the man of medicine arrived at his own door, at the same moment with Temple; who, beseeching a private audience, told him briefly what had happened, where he was going to, and wherein he wanted assistance. The Doctor stared and hemmed—looked unutterably shocked when made acquainted with the contents of the billet,—would have made many objections to Temple's scheme, but was overruled by the vehemence of his manner;—and at last, half reluctantly, gave him the run of an old clothes press, which stood in a laboratory leading out of his study, wherein he could find garments sufficiently obsolete to metamorphose him into any character he chose to adopt.

Temple requested to be left alone for a few moments, and while the Doctor's orderly and every day notions were undergoing much discomposure, at the thought of his being led into any aiding or abetting of a masquerading, Walter was busily at work, with a strange and eager zest, which approached somewhat near

the positive enjoyment, such as a drunkard experiences when, after a long fast, his lip touches a glass running over with some rare cordial. Blame him not—ye who have no pleasure in adventure, unless you could make human nature over again :—if he laughed aloud, as he tied his long black hair out of sight, and stained his face two shades redder than his natural complexion, and stuffed himself out with one or two of the well fed Doctor's waistcoats, until he had added ten years to his age while the shovel hat and slouching loose upper Benjamin and ample top boots made him a present of an additional lustre. He heard a voice in the study, and having locked up his own garments in the press, issued forth, curious to try the effect of his new habiliments.

Mrs. Goodrich had hunted out her husband, to propound some small dilemma for his solution. The Doctor, though a sedate man, and not given to unnecessary motion, absolutely jumped with surprise when Walter strode forth—not Temple in masquerade, but positively another character ;—and the lady, who was shy

of strangers, crept behind her husband, with a look of great surprise, and her usual weak “Dear me, Doctor!”

“Fine weather for my ride home,” said Walter, in a voice of forty-five—“Good day, Doctor;—and I’ll bring my little girl the next time I come over, if she is not better.—Shake hands, madam—and if you are ever coming our way—my mistress will be proud to give you a cup of tea, and a bed, and your husband too!”—He tramped out of the room with a burly step, which, as Mrs. Goodrich averred, “was enough to shake the house down; and dear me, Doctor,” continued she, “what a thumb! I thought he would have pinched my hand to bits.”

The Doctor whistled, and thought many things within himself, which he did not consider it discreet to promulgate. Perhaps the circumstance of his meeting Mr. Arnold in the street soon after, and that gentleman’s mouth—as was now usually the case,—being full of Temple’s praises, might have some effect in settling his dislocated thoughts; but all that evening, he sate muttering to himself “Wild

work !—strange beings these young men now-a-days !”

Walter had, in the old wild times of his youth, been remarkable for his reckless horsemanship, and did not on the present occasion spare his steed. The town was soon left behind, and a wide peaceful country opened before the rider, with a blue hill in the horizon, fringed with wood and crowned with a beacon : such a scene as makes its way with the lover of nature by its calm richness, and the varied lights and shades, dropped upon it by passing sunshine and clouds. Much has been said of the inspiration of mountain scenery—and of the strong cords wherewith Nature holds the hearts of men, who have been born among her clouds and fastnesses, and with which she is ever drawing wanderers to return to the rugged homes of their childhood. So be it ; but the feelings are not shallower, though stiller than the mountaineer’s, with which one, who has been long in populous cities pent, beholds such a fair familiar scene rise before him—wooing him, with its repose and fertility, to turn aside from his cares, and become a

child once more : and though Temple was one to whom beetling cliffs and tumbling waters might have been supposed to be more attractive than a champaign like this, the sights of well known knolls tufted with trees, which stood out in peculiar forms against the horizon sky—of the afternoon sunshine glittering upon the windows of distant farm-houses, from the chimneys whereof the smoke seemed hardly to ascend;—of long lanes cradled over with beech trees, and set in rich hedge-rows such as many an inhabitant of the city has never seen;—these impressed him strongly though gently;—the tumult of his spirit subsided to a calmer mood—and he found himself riding slowly, long before he had come within five miles of Levison Court.

But it was necessary that he should rouse himself, and support the character which his disguise required—for a loose nail in one of his horse's shoes required immediate reparation, and a blacksmith's shop, which stood by the road side under a fine old ash tree, was not to be passed. Temple stopped, and the Vulcan came out; a stout man in a leathern

apron, whose face Walter knew as well as his own. One or two of the surplus population of the hamlet were lounging upon the bench under the aforesaid tree, for the chance of the cheap luxury of a little gossip.

“Where have ye been, Jem?” said the blacksmith, looking up to accost a new comer.

“Up with th’ auctioneer at Levison Court.”

“What then, he’s comed down at last, I reckon.”

“Ey—he has so—a poor half-starved looking creature he is—but dear me, there’s nothing to sell, not a stitch in the house, but a parcel of old rickling chairs and tables;—and as for the place, why, you never seed any thing like the garden—all trodden, and smashed—nay, fairly now, such a spot!”

“What do you say, my man?” asked Temple, “is Levison Court to be sold?”

“It is so;—the creditors have gotten it among ’em at last, and the auctioneer, Jem Hill says, has been over to-day—well, ’twould be queer, and like one of the Colonel’s old tricks, if he were to come back himself among them all.”

“ He’ll find the coffin he lies in,” replied another, “ too strong for tricks—I seed him buried.”

“ Ay—but he’s gotten out once, they say,” observed another, a tall wondering boy, “ Mat-ty Bimson seed him striding along in Dale Park.”

“ Matty Bimson’s a gomeril, and thou art another for rehearsing her nonsense;—hie thee, fetch me the other hammer.”

The repair was presently finished, and Temple rode on.

This little dialogue, which Walter overheard, recalled much of the eagerness with which he had set out,—and he presently reached the gates of Levison Court, whence a straight approach, once flanked by majestic trees, ascended to the house, which was now bathed in the mellow light of the sun, descending in the opposite horizon without a cloud. The mansion was extensive and picturesque in its architecture. It had been built by a proud family in the times of Catholic importance, and accommodation for six monks had been attached to it; a chapel also, and burial ground; the two last were

still used, though the house was deserted, and a priest occupied the few rooms which had been devoted to monastic purposes. The chapel was so far incorporated with the rest of the building, that its front, with a large window, broke the long line of scalloped gables not unpleasantly—and the crucifix above looked not amiss among the tall chimney-stacks, which loaded the steep grey roof. The mansion, as well as the surrounding domain, was in wretched condition; the noble trees had been all cut down, the hedges torn up, and the fields laid waste, and the dreariness of the scene showed all the stronger by being contrasted with the rich teeming plain which lay, spread like a map before those who looked from the portal.

But Walter turned aside, about a hundred paces before he reached the grand entrance. "This should be the way," he said, diverging along a path which led entirely round the building, till he reached a sheltered corner, where, in virtue of his office of pastor and physician, Mr. Le Beaumont was still permitted to reside. Round this little spot were

some signs of neatness, and some trace of inhabitants to be seen ; smoke rose from a chimney, a passion flower was trained round the door, and a neat looking servant issued from a stable in an adjoining wing, and offered to take Temple's horse ; informing him, at the same time, that his master was not at home, nor expected to arrive for an hour or two.

Temple, though eager to lose no time in his researches, was not sorry to be left alone for a while, that he might fr  ely indulge the recollections which began to crowd across his mind, thick and fast. The servant, after the old hospitable fashion, offered him such rest and refreshment as the house afforded, till its owner should return ; but Walter walked out, and having found that locks and keys had long since ceased to do their office, turned through an arched gateway in the wall, to the inner court, which was surrounded on three sides by the house, and on the fourth communicated with the little cemetery by a sort of terrace with steps so suddenly descending, that the place of graves and its melancholy sights of monuments and funerals, could not shock the

inhabitants of the mansion, by being visible from its windows.

Every object was familiar. The dial, in the centre of the grass plot, to which the last wicked and whimsical possessor of the place had chained two bears for the purpose of terrifying his guests,—and, just beyond the reach of their chains, had been accustomed to deposit the helplessly intoxicated—and the window, at which he was wont to post himself, that he might lose none of their waking terrors—both remained, and it required little exercise of the imagination to conjure up the presiding spirit of these gone by orgies in visible form—especially, when shadows began to lengthen and stars to come out. Nay—Temple even fancied that, in that very window—but it could be only fancy, for that window was now closely boarded up. As the evening deepened, a feeling of intense loneliness began to creep over the watcher, and such an awe as few like to own, though the strongest must have felt it some time or other. He was thus busy with his own reflections, leaning, propped in a shadowy corner of the quadrangle, when a step

upon the flagged esplanade which run round it, made him start. - It was the Priest, who had returned a little earlier than he was expected, and had lost no time in coming out to find his visitor. A fine old man he was, with a high massy forehead scantily crowned with hair of the most perfectly silver hue, and something in his manner to inspire confidence as well as respect. He accosted Temple with the condescending dignity of one who speaks to an inferior, and invited him to return to the house, and declare his business.

Mr. Le Beaumont led the way to the neat little parlour, humbly furnished,—with the exception of a few choice books, and a Madonna in an ebony frame above the chimney piece, and Walter cast off his heavy thread-bare coat, and slouch hat ;—untied his hair, and removed with his handkerchief as much of the paint upon his face as he could, before the slow country servant girl had brought in candles and the tea-tray. He then turned round, and confronted the Priest, whose countenance underwent an immediate change of expression from mild civility to aversion, amounting al-

most to horror. But he constrained himself strongly, and only said, "It is long since we have met, Mr. Temple, and you must excuse me. May I ask the object of your visit?"

Temple bowed meekly in return to this scanty, almost severe welcome:—"I deserve that you should thus regard me," said he, in a tone of deep feeling—"and yet I had hoped that you might have heard that I am somewhat different now from Colonel Levison's companion and tool, whom you had such good reason to hate and repel."

"Sit down, Sir," said the old man, unconsciously softened by his humility of manner,—
"I am hasty—but why this disguising? I do not like it. If you *are* changed from what you were when we last met, you are welcome here."

"You have not then, heard, that I was established as a merchant in ——?"

"No—I go rarely to any town,—and never from home when I can help it;—and see few, save those of my own flock."

"Why then," said Temple, brightening, "I have a longer tale to tell than I thought. You

must not refuse to hear me to an end. I have sought you, in all good faith and honesty, to ask your counsel and assistance,—and this disguise—you shall hear every thing.”

“After tea,” replied Mr. Le Beaumont, with more urbanity than before; for there was a sincerity in Walter’s manner enough to obliterate any prejudices or remembrances.—“You have ridden hard. Did you come all the way on horseback?”

“I did.”

“Then you must be tired as well as hungry;—and so am I. We will eat and drink first, and then discuss graver matters.”

The Priest himself had been absent on a long and harassing ride, and was glad of the refreshment of his favourite meal; and his hospitality cancelled his first coolness, if not in civility of manner. But all the while they sate at table, Temple’s thoughts could not help wandering from the easy conversation of his host, who could be the man of society when he pleased, though at his heart he was as simple as a child,—and his eyes ever and anon strayed out of the room, and fixed themselves

upon the familiar objects in the court without, which were now faintly displayed by the light of the rising moon.

“It is of no use,” said Mr. Le Beaumont, when he had thrice addressed Walter, without receiving an answer, “it is of no use to talk of any thing but the past. I see where your thoughts are ; and mine have not kept pace with my words. What have you to tell me?”

“It is impossible to sit where I sit, and forget what has been,” replied Walter,—“and the more so, from the business concerning which I have sought you. I belong to another church than your own,—but you are a pious man, Sir, and I can trust you. Will you be pleased to keep what suspicions or communications I may have to impart to you, with as much secrecy, as if they were delivered by one of your own flock, at confession?”

“I will,” replied the Priest seriously ;—“presuming that such a compliance involves nothing wrong on my part.”

“I have reason,” said Temple, fixing his eyes steadily upon Mr. Le Beaumont, “to believe in the possibility of Colonel Levi-

son's being yet alive. May I ask you, Sir, whether such a suspicion has ever crossed your mind?"

The old man coloured:—but it was the natural consequence of being subjected to the inquisition of Walter's keen eyes.

He replied immediately, "No, Mr. Temple, I am startled by your abruptness—but the thing is *impossible*. What has excited your suspicions?—mere reports?—I know that such have been flying about among the timid peasantry hereabouts,—but the thing is impossible. I performed the burial service over him;—he lies in yonder chapel, as you may have heard."

"You did:—and it is therefore from you that I seek a solution of my doubts. I will tell you why I must know the truth,—what events of consequence hang on this question's being satisfactorily decided; and then leave it to your conscience, as a man, and minister of the gospel, whether you can hold back any *opinion* which may throw light upon so dark a matter."

"I trust," replied the Priest, a little stiffly,

“that you will not mention any private affairs of your own, for the mere purpose of ensuring my truthfulness.”

Walter hastened to apologize, and briefly told him the events with which the reader is already acquainted ;—owned to him the delicate situation in which he stood, with respect to Mrs. Levison,—(the Priest shook his head at the mention of her name) and mentioned the circumstance which had refreshed his suspicions ;—not forgetting the midnight disturbances at Dale Hall, and the popular rumour, which must have *some* foundation. Mr. Le Beaumont heard him to an end with grave attention.

“I cannot wonder, after what you have told me, at your anxiety to clear up a point which concerns you so much ; and I may confess to you that the sum of the circumstances which you have mentioned, is enough to alarm any one. But I cannot for an instant allow them any value ;—I have seen his corpse.”

“You have !” exclaimed Temple, eagerly.

“I saw his corpse, during the days when it lay in state at Levison Court.”

“Forgive me, Sir, if I question you closer on a matter which is of such serious importance. Did you see the features?—Was the body in the coffin?”

The Priest hesitated for a moment.

“I did—and yet I did not—that is, I had such a repugnance to gaze upon the face, that although I uncovered it—excuse me, Sir, on this subject,—the sight was too horrible! You have doubtless been told the manner of his death.”

“And you have then no doubt that you saw the features of the dead Colonel Levison?”

“None—not the least—why should I? what end could such a deception answer?”

“To escape from justice.”

“But might he not have fled the kingdom?”

“He might have his reasons for wishing to remain here concealed; and you do not know his nature as well as I do. You forget that if there was a thing to be done, he would find out some crooked way, which it would have never occurred to any one else to imagine, and enjoy it for its very difficulty; and when I remember the horrible threats of revenge which

he vented at our last meeting, because I was resolute in emancipating myself from his power,—the thought of his lurking about for some secret end of darkness,—it would make me mad!—And then you see that I am not the only one to whom the idea has occurred.”

“ I know,” replied Mr. Le Beaumont, “ that the rumour has not yet died away ; and our people, from living in a secluded part of the county, and one peopled with legends, are, perhaps, somewhat credulous. But, Sir, as we are upon the subject, who shall say that they are not right in fancying that the Almighty for his own purposes does sometimes allow the spirits of the departed to re-appear in the scenes of their former exploits ?—and how would you put such a notion to rest, unless you could examine the grave ?—and even that, —so long a time has elapsed,—would be hardly satisfactory.”

“ You have come to the very point !” exclaimed Walter eagerly. “ Will you permit me to make such an examination ?”

Mr. Le Beaumont shuddered ; and a strong

expression of sick disgust spread itself over his features.

“Dear Sir, consider the stake!” cried Temple, his vehemence every moment increasing. “I am about to leave England, under circumstances in which doubt is painful—*may* be fatal. I know the fearfulness of what I propose, but it is the only alternative.”

“But what satisfaction can you hope for? Corruption ”——

“His hands,” said Temple, in a very low voice—“You may remember that the fourth finger of the left was shot off; and I am sure that I should know—I *must* know whether he be alive or not! It is a work of necessity. I pray—I entreat of you to permit me,—you have the keys of the vault;—do not withstand me, as you would avoid being answerable for any mischief which is yet to come.”

“I cannot!” replied the Priest, in a voice of the utmost repugnance;—“it is *too* dreadful!”

“Think of what may be more dreadful!—if he *should* be yet alive, waiting for some moment in which he may involve us all in

ruin? It is so easy to put the question to rest, once and for ever."

"Dare you go alone?"

"Dare!—I would wish for a witness—but"—

"And it is not my duty," said Le Beaumont, "if it *must* be so, to shrink from accompanying you. We will, then, when all is quiet:—and yet there are very few, who like to think of entering that chapel after sunset, alone."

"What?—have you too been disturbed?"

"Let us not speak of these things," replied the Priest nervously;—"and may Heaven pardon us, if you have persuaded me to sanction what is amiss!—But when I think of the awful wickedness of that man,—and how his name haunts the country for miles round,—I confess to you that a strange fear creeps over me."

"Had we not better proceed at once?—The longer it is delayed, the more difficult it will be to carry it through. If you feel unequal to such a task,—I have no dread of going alone."

"No, no!" muttered the Priest, "I will

attend you. You will require—wait awhile, and I will return to you presently.”

Walter was left alone for a few moments, to look out into the quadrangle, every object in which was now clearly displayed as the moon rose above the house-top. His excited fancy again and again caught glimpses of some dark object stealing among its formal clumps of evergreens, and moaning sounds in every rush of air which passed. Something touched him upon his shoulder ; it was the Priest, who bore a bunch of large keys in his hand, a dark lantern, chisels, and a turn-screw.

“ Walk softly,” whispered he :—“ we must not alarm any one.”

The vestry of the chapel at Levison Court opened directly from the Priest’s house, through a narrow door covered with dark cloth, and again communicated with the chapel by another door, almost as small, which, when closed, had the appearance of a panel in the wall. The building, though small, was very highly enriched with decorations. Close to the altar on either side of it was a large gothic arch, closed with gilded open tracery.

Beneath the one to the right, was the seat in which the family belonging to the mansion had been accustomed to attend their devotions. It was garnished with faded escutcheons and tarnished velvet cushions, and looked all the gloomier, from being half seen by the light of one lamp, hanging low before the altar, which was never allowed to expire. The arch, on the left, was the entrance to a sort of anti-chamber to the vault where the bodies of the family were deposited;—and here were many mouldering hatchments, and tattered banners which had floated over some Syrian battle-field in the days of the Crusades.

When the first railing was passed, the Priest uncovered the lanthorn.—“ This is the worse lock,” said he, applying the key to the door :—“ Hold the light,—Sancta Maria !—what is moving in the shadow yonder ?—did you hear ?”

Walter put down the screen over the light, and looked keenly, breathlessly out into the chapel, so faintly illuminated by the pale moon-shine. But there was nothing—nothing to be heard, save the throbbing of his own pulses,

and the shivering of his companion, who presently exclaimed, in a tone of the utmost horror, "There again !—did you not hear something laugh ? Let us go, I entreat of you,—let us go at once."

"There is nothing," replied Walter, in a low voice ;—"let us go in at once, and it will soon be over.—Give me the key ;—we are here for no evil purpose, and Heaven is over all.—So—it gives way. Remain there, and let me go alone."

"O, no, no !—I must be with you," answered the Priest, over whom terror was every minute gaining stronger and stronger mastery. "Holy Mary forgive us if we are doing wrong ! Yonder he lies,—the one covered with black velvet—I cannot bear to look !—Here is—but, Jesu ! you will not need it,—the lid has been loosened !"

Walter took the lanthorn from his companion's powerless hand, and a step through the low dark vault brought him close to the object of his search. It was even as the Priest had said ;—the lid of the coffin in which the remains of the godless Colonel

Levison had been deposited, *had* been removed, it was clear, and imperfectly replaced. Temple had never before felt the overwhelming presence of Death, as now,—when he stood by the side of the dust of his enemy,—his tempter, now motionless in the sleep and corruption of the tomb. The Priest had withdrawn from his side, and was muttering prayers for the soul of the dead, and for the protection of all good angels, with his rosary in his hands. Walter laid his hand upon the coffin, almost expecting to feel something tremble beneath,—lifted it, with a desperate resolution. The grave clothes had been disturbed, it was evident, though they were now mouldering fast. He put them aside, with unutterable loathing—another effort—one steady look,—and doubt would be at an end. The face had lost all recognizable form and character,—the arms had been severed at the shoulder, and were both wanting!

“Did you laugh?” cried the Priest suddenly :—“*Sancta Maria ora pro nobis!*”

“Come away!” cried Walter hastily, replacing the coffin-lid, and trembling with

sudden terror ; “Come away, it is all in vain !” —he expected every moment to see his companion fall lifeless before him.—What his disappointment and vexation were may be imagined. There was nothing, then, whereon to found any conclusion. How they left the vault, and made their way through the dim chapel, to the cheerful fire, and the lighted room, neither of them could ever tell.

It was miserable to be compelled to leave Mr. Le Beaumont in the state of stupor into which he fell, when the adventure was fairly accomplished,—but it was necessary—and sick at heart, and utterly dispirited, Walter was compelled to resume his disguise, and depart. The determination of his spirit may be judged by his being able to undertake a lonely midnight ride through a district haunted by remembrances, after having been so powerfully affected by the chapel scene, and when he was recalled again and again to the chamber of corruption, by its odour, which, whether real or fancied, did not leave him till the fresh sea breeze had blown over him for many days.

PART VI.

THE VOYAGE—

AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

MRS. LEVISON'S last preparations were successfully made ;—her last tears of lamentation, so inconsistent with her former professions of delight in the prospect of leaving England, were shed—the last anxious consultation held between Mr. Arnold and Temple.—Doctor Goodrich had taken leave of his friend, with “ Good bye,—I suppose I shall see you no more as a single man :” —hands were shaken—handkerchiefs waved—and the coast of old England faded from the view of the passengers on board the Arnold, as she set forth upon her voyage in

prosperous majesty. She was a roomy ship, commanded by a captain, whose bold and cordial manners towards men, softened down to tenderness as often as he addressed women, together with his thousand tales of adventure, and the confidence he possessed in his own good fortune, and the sea-worthiness of the vessel he commanded, were enough to tempt any one in strong health and spirits to take a cruise with him, and to reconcile the most ailing and dispirited of hypocondriacs to the chances and privations of a voyage. Walter rejoiced in the choice he had made; more especially when he considered the delicate and anxious charge he had undertaken.

The full extent of this delicacy and anxiety was not revealed to him till land had long disappeared—till Mrs. Levison had become so far seasoned to the world of waters, as to be able to appear upon deck. Her first greeting of Walter, upon issuing from the confinement of her cabin, was as affectionate as the child's who meets his indulgent friend after a short separation,—and she made haste to appropriate him to herself. He was to read to her as she

sat upon deck—to support her when she chose to walk—to be the patient listener to all her ebullitions of feeling, varying in form, but monotonous in substance. She was sure that he would think for her—anticipate all her little caprices—and there was no one on board to dispute her claim—her only fellow passengers besides Walter, being a surgeon, who had been broiled and baked in almost every one of the Tropics, and was now on his way to receive his last and hottest roasting in the West Indies, and a poor faded woman of a lower class, whose husband held some small situation under government in Jamaica, and had left her in the care of her father. That father was dead, and the orphan was on her way to join her husband, and with her, a little girl, a pale flaxen-haired child, with a melancholy eye, and a mournful smile, which told how the pleasant time of childhood had been darkened by Poverty, “that weary thing.”

Mrs. Levison had nothing to fear from these,—and, though she would have wept at the heartless injustice of such a speech, had any one told her that she felt perfectly happy,

she was at all events *nearer* to that state, than she had been for many long years. She wanted to be all and every thing to some one person, at once tender and gallant. She had found such an one, and was placed in circumstances most favourable to enjoying uninterruptedly the full value of the possession.

All this tenderness, this confidence so certain of return, was most perplexing to Walter, in proportion as it was delightful. It is true, that he had been assigned as second husband to Mrs. Levison, from the first hour of their meeting,—that the Arnolds had countenanced the report, feeling how useful it might be to their credit to be able to talk of Mr. Arnold's young friend and partner, who was going to be married to a lady with a hundred thousand pounds of her own,—and that this arrangement of their voyage to Jamaica in company, made their connection so established a thing, that Rumour, satiated with certainty, had started off on some other tack, (be it remembered that we are on the sea.) But, for all this, Walter was far from having reached the decisive point before they left England,—

further still, after that hurried visit to Levison Court.

In the first place, till the misgivings which haunted his mind were satisfactorily silenced, the idea of his marrying Mrs. Levison could not be harboured ;—in the second, he had secretly resolved to make his fortune sure before he sought the hand of any woman,—this being only a part of the scheme of life which he had so rigidly laid down for himself ;—and lastly, grievous as it may be to admit it,—the perfect openness of his companion—the trustful reliance upon his sympathy which left nothing for him to elicit or discover—though perfectly distinct from boldness—was a little too *full-blown* to attract his love. He was daily more and more sobered down from the cavalier into the friend,—though she was blind to this change ; and, intent upon securing sympathy, overlooked what one a shade more artificial would have taken into the account, the chances of conquest. If she loved him, as a woman loves the man she must and ought to marry—it was, as yet, unknown to herself. In fact, such a discovery must have been, at once, fatal to

her daily habits of seeking his society, calling for his assistance, and consulting with him on her future plans.

Her eyes were fast—not unsealed—but introduced into a condition to admit of their opening—by her feeling discomfort on witnessing the notice which Temple began to take of little Annie Bakewell. He loved to seat the child upon his knee, and hear her innocent wonder “How strange every thing was,—and when should they come to any trees?”—and her talk of how she had been used to ride on a donkey, which was called Duffel, when she lived with grandpapa, and how she had cried when bad men took it away to be sold.” He delighted to hold her over the ship’s side, and bid her look down upon the busy deep, with its pearly waters always changing,—and strange fish gambolling in the vessel’s wake ; and she was afraid of nothing when he took care of her,—and when she was poorly, he would amuse her for hours, and wrap her up so warmly in his cloak, and talk to her softly, while he held her little hand, about the palm trees and the beautiful birds of the island, to which they were

bound. Every one on board loved Annie; even the grim Scotch surgeon, whose heart had grown leathery by being knocked about the world for the last five and twenty years, would toss her up in his long lank arms, and then hunt in his capacious pockets for a lozenge or a fig;—but Walter loved her most;—and it was a love which Mrs. Levison could not understand. She would even sometimes go so far as to hint, that shipboard was not the proper place for children:—and though, at a word, she would have lavished any sum of money upon Annie Bakewell, she could not willingly spare from herself as much of Temple's time and thoughts as were given to the child; and showed, in a thousand indirect ways, that it found no favour in her eyes, that his good stars should have sent him such a toy to vary the monotony of a voyage.

This jealousy, to call things by their right names, could not be long concealed, even from a man so little vain as Walter. It troubled him greatly:—it occurred to him, sometimes, that the simplest way of putting their intercourse upon a right footing, would be to make

her partaker of his suspicions,—and then again, he remembered how delicate her health was, and how the bare retrospect of the days of her married life was, at any time, sufficient to throw her into a pitiable state of agitation. Were he to destroy the small portion of happiness she was permitted to enjoy, it might cost her her reason, or her life. He was therefore obliged, painful as it was, to withdraw himself gradually from that close communion they had at first maintained, and rather subject himself to the charge of unkindness and inconstancy, than tear away the veil, upon the preservation of which her peace of mind depended.

Meanwhile, they proceeded on their voyage without any hindrance or obstacle. Scarcely one day was marked by weather squally enough to merit insertion as such in the Arnold's log book ;—the perils and privations of the sea were as yet unknown,—and its novelty not wholly exhausted. Mrs. Levison spent a great part of every day upon deck, and averred that the ocean breezes had already been of such service to her, that she could sing without feeling any evil consequences. Her guitar,

therefore, was often put in requisition, though its use became almost agonizing to her, when she perceived that the only listener she cared to attract was less constantly at her side than formerly. She was sitting one evening, much later than usual, in her most melancholy mood; Temple was standing at some distance, with his arms folded, watching the spot in the heavens where the sun had gone down in the midst of clouds of such a varied gorgeousness as are never seen in our northern latitudes. The little girl was playing about his feet. Mrs. Levison thought that he was utterly careless of her music,—little knowing that every note of the lay she sung made its way to his heart.

We sail along—we sail along—
And straight our course we hold
Toward islands full of jewel caves
And sands that shine as gold;
And palms through which, like fairy plumes,
The gentle south-wind strays,
And flowers, beneath whose weight of stars,
The ancient forests blaze.

But what care I for that bright shore,
Or flower, or gem, or tree ?
A lonely heart—a lonely heart
Is best upon the sea.

We sail along—we sail along
Across the Ocean foam,
And night and day, the mariners gay,
Are singing songs of home ;
The old man of his faithful wife,
And children's eager smile ;
The young man of the dark-eyed girls
That haunt that fairy isle.
No more—no more !—on that bright shore
Are none to welcome me ;—
A lonely heart—a lonely heart
Is best upon the sea !

She ceased :—and Walter was beside her.

“ I think,” said he, “ that I never heard you sing that song before.”

She hastily unslung her guitar from her neck, and rose ;—“ I did not think that you took so much notice of my songs *now*,” replied she, with a quivering lip.

“ Nay,—you do me injustice ;—with only

one musician on board—and such an one, I must be worse than deaf to neglect her!”

“ Temple, I cannot bear this tone, so light, so indifferent. What has come between us, that you speak to me as if we were merely heartless common acquaintance?—that you—” she burst into a passion of tears.

“ You have sung too much,” said he soothingly; “ I must prohibit any more such exercise of your voice, if the consequences are your being so nervous and unwell;—come, you shall go below, the dew is beginning to fall. Just take one parting look at that splendid cluster of stars, and then go down.” He led her to the companion ladder, while she repeated, “ Go down!—Heaven knows I am sunk low enough already; I wish I were laid below the sea!”

This last exhibition of feeling admitted of no misinterpretation. After she had retired to her own cabin, Walter paced the deck for an hour, in no enviable frame of mind. If there be one charge which is painful above another, it is the being blamed for fickleness and unkindness towards the friendless;—and most

distressing is it, because very often, the party accused is placed in circumstances under which he cannot defend himself. It was impossible to explain the causes of this alteration of manner, which had given Mrs. Levison so much pain, without increasing the difficulties of their situation, by showing her that Walter had interpreted her confidence to mean something so far beyond common good understanding, that it was necessary to put an end to it at once and for ever. . He walked to and fro, busily revolving these and other perplexities in his mind, which was already sufficiently burdened with the cares of commerce, until a strange weariness seemed to come over him, and, throwing himself down upon a sail, he fell into a sort of reverie, hearing, without noting it, the wash of the water, and the dull, droning voice of the man at the helm. By degrees, the sailors, who had been gathered together in little knots, telling stories while they mended their clothes, or finished their evening's allowance of grog—dropped off—and everything was still.

How long he lay in that waking dream, he

was not aware. He was roused from it by loud shrieks from the furthest end of the deck,—shrill cries of “ Help ! help ! for God’s sake ! ” He sprung up immediately, and hastened towards the spot whence the voice had proceeded, though it was so dark that he could see nothing, and, in his haste, stumbled over a rope. The outcry had disturbed some one or two others of the crew, and when he reached the mizen mast, he perceived that Annie’s mother was leaning against it, surrounded by the startled sailors, and sobbing, as if her heart would break.

“ Why now, Mrs. Bakewell, what is the matter ? ” said he, approaching her gently ; “ stand away, my men—and let me talk to her a little, you see she is sadly frightened !—what is to be done ?—who has hurt you ? ”

“ O Sir ! ” cried she passionately, “ it is that Mr. Vial !—he lets me have no peace, and though he knows that I am a married woman, is always running after me, and he says he is sure that I shall find my husband dead, when we get to Kingston—poor George ! Hea-

ven in its mercy forbid!—and he was here just now—and so rude!”

“But what brought you upon deck at such an hour, Mrs. Bakewell?” said Walter, who was resolved to sift the matter to the bottom.

“I had been washing a few little things of Annie’s, Sir, and forgot to take them in,—and he was after me!—and he said, Sir, at last—that if my husband was living, why, his mistress was no better, for that her husband was alive, for all she was going to be married to you, Sir.”

Walter commanded his surprise; “Well but, you see he is gone now—I will talk to him, and take care you shall be persecuted no more; and if that is not enough, we will speak to the Captain; you had better go quietly down now—I promise you, you shall be molested no more.”

“But to think,” continued poor Mrs. Bakewell, still weeping abundantly, “that he should tell me that my poor George is dead!—poor fellow!—and as if I would look at him, if I were a widow ten times over.”

“ Well—well—never mind what he says, he was perhaps a little in liquor ; I will call him to account the first thing in the morning. Come, this is not air for a woman to be upon deck in—you had better go down now.”

With much persuasion, the affronted and fretful woman was induced to go and cry out the remainder of her grief, in her berth ; and Walter resumed his walk, with new matter of conjecture. Vial knew that Colonel Levison was yet living !—could he have written that anonymous letter to Isabella ? and, if so, was he merely keeping the rumour alive for some purpose of his own ? — Walter had always strongly disliked this same Vial—and henceforward resolved to watch him narrowly, as well as to subject him to a severe catechizing on the morrow.

With respect to the catechizing, his plans were entirely traversed. Scarcely had he risen, when the suspected person made his appearance in his cabin, and requested an audience. His air was confused, and his countenance penitent ; “ If you please, Sir,” said he, most respectfully, “ I believe that I drank a little

too much last night,—will you be so good as not to mention it before my mistress this time—she would never look over it.”

Temple eyed him very severely. There was nothing affected, nothing displeasing in the manner of his apology. “You should find yourself some employment on shipboard,” said Walter, “better than getting drunk, and teasing a respectable woman. Can you write?”

“O yes, Sir,” said the man, eagerly producing a neatly kept account-book, “tolerably well.” Walter cast his eye over it. The writing was certainly far different from the characters of the anonymous billet. He was now somewhat at fault how to pursue his enquiry; “Vial,” said he, “did you attend your late master’s funeral?”

“Master?—if you please, Sir, I never was in service before; and have only lived with my mistress for these last two years.”

“Well—you may go; let me hear of such disturbances no more, or I shall feel it my duty to mention them to Mrs. Levison.”

There was nothing more to be said, no further pretext for enquiry; but this fresh irrita-

tion of Walter's suspicions, increased his circumspection of conduct towards his fair and delicate friend, who wept and wondered,—though she complained no more. The sickness of his playmate furnished him as an excuse, in part, for withdrawing some little of his attention. A month ago, he could hardly have believed that he could be made to take so much interest in any child. But it was astonishing what a universal sensation was excited by Annie's illness. This appeared in the form of complete prostration of strength, and a longing for the things of land, which, uttered in her simple childish language, was most touching; she was, however, a very model of patience,—most affectionately grateful to every one. The surgeon prescribed his best for her; the Captain declared, with something like moisture in his eyes, that she should want for nothing; Temple was unwearied in carrying her about wherever she wished to feel the breathing of the fresh air (she had ceased to take pleasure in the sea, and its changing sights); but their kindness was bestowed in vain. She was to die,—and with words upon her lips of

the home in England which she had left, and his hand held firmly between her own, she fell asleep upon her mother's knee. She awaked no more ! so easily did her spirit pass, that no one could guess the precise moment of its departure.—She was buried in the sea just a fortnight before the Arnold arrived in Kingston.

And now came the moment when Mrs. Levinson must separate from her friend and conductor, whose care had never diminished in substance, however much it had appeared to have done so in seeming. It was necessary for Temple immediately to repair to different parts of the island ; and she was presently settled in a handsome house of her own, with suites of apartments and retinues of slaves, for the first time in her life, to feel the full worth of her large fortune. The society of such a woman was sure to be courted, and, as for the present, her health seemed to be approaching a state of restoration. Walter left her,—perfectly satisfied in his mind that the step she had taken promised well for her happiness,—to devote all his energy to the furtherance of his views.

Their parting was full of feeling, and for many days, the lady refused to be comforted.

* * * * *

Three months passed over like a dream. In the course of that time Walter's exertions had been most amazing; and, in spite of the trial of a change of climate, achieved so much in the way of collecting remittances, and inspiring confidence by his presence, that he felt relieved in his mind, as to the issue of his endeavours, should the English house have done its part, and wrote to Mr. Arnold, full of hope and confidence. He had been repeatedly warned by experienced residents, to spare himself, but he was too eagerly engaged to have time to think of their counsel; and the consequence of all this violent exertion of body and mind was a violent fever, which attacked him on his return to Kingston.

He arrived late at night, in the midst of a drenching shower of rain. Before morning, he was insensibly delirious, and it was a blessed thing that his labours were successfully completed, for it was many weeks from that day before he was conscious enough to put a

question or to frame a reply : and during that time, his sensations were those of indefinite pain, and of the presence of a phantasmagoria of ugly confused images ; such as the constant ascension of ladders, whose summit he was never to reach ; the entangling distress of an unlimited sea of figures unceasingly fluctuating before his eyes, which he was to reduce to a regular calculation ; or, worst of all, the misery of the face which he hated, beyond all others, appearing in all the ghastly lividness of the tomb before him, fixing constantly upon him the same wrathful Medusa-like stare,—with the thousand other phantom torments which belong particularly to the bed of fever.

Slowly, very slowly, did this chaos pass away, and he became somewhat calmer, and more conscious of his own identity, though so weak, that he could not raise his hand to his head without assistance. He had scarcely reached that most distressing point of convalescence, at which the invalid begins to trouble himself about the matters which are passing in the world around him, before he is strong enough to consider them collectedly, or even

to be aware of the presence of the person by whom he had been so carefully tended, when one day a conversation, close to his ear, impressed him for the moment, and was not, like all other previous incidents, forgotten as soon as it passed.

“ So it is you, Mr. Vial ?—what makes you come here again ? ”

“ My mistress has sent me to enquire how Mr. Temple is.”

“ And she contents herself with sending ! she would have *come* three months ago. You may tell her, that he is better—I wish she would choose some other messenger.”

“ Why, Mrs. Bakewell, what objection can you possibly have to me ? ”

“ I don’t like your coming up stairs, so forward ;—are you not afraid of catching the fever ? and whenever you are here, he might know it, for he always tosses, and seems so disturbed. There—Heaven bless him ! he could not do as much a week ago ! he will get through—Surgeon Huntley said so from the first.”

“ Afraid of catching the fever ! ” replied Vial,
“ I was well seasoned to such things years

ago ;—no—I was going to offer to take your place, and watch him for an hour. It would do you good to breathe the fresh air ; you are grown as thin as a skeleton since you have been nursing him.”

Temple declared, upon his recovery, that he had never known such a moment of deadly terror as the one in which he dreaded being left to Vial’s tender mercies. He was instantaneously relieved by Mrs. Bakewell’s “ Thank you, Mr. Vial, I could not be easy to leave him ;—it is little enough that my husband and I can do for him, when I think how good he was to that dear little Annie, who is now an angel in Heaven—if there ever was one. I will trust him to nobody else, that when he gets well, he may know—”

“ And make you some handsome recompence.”—

“ Keep your sneers to yourself, Mr. Vial ; or save them for your mistress, who, after all her running after Mr. Temple, is going to make a fool of herself, if all tales are true. Well, a fine handful he will have with her money. And now, go away, if you do not mean

to make me angry ; and don't come near the house again—for your company is desired by none in it. I wonder that you dare—”

Her voice grew shriller as it followed the unwelcome visitor out of the chamber, and down stairs. Whilst he was trying to put their dialogue together again, and resolving to question Mrs. Bakewell, (who, it appeared, had been his guardian angel,) he fell asleep.

His active nurse was sitting patiently by his bed-side, on the next day, when he suddenly opened his eyes, and, in a very weak voice, said :

“ That is you, Mrs. Bakewell, is it not ? ”

“ Bless you ! and do you know me at last ? Why, I declare, you look quite sensible ! I told the man who wanted to measure you for your coffin, the other day, that he was here a week too soon,—and he is dead himself since ! ”

“ Have I been so ill as that ? ”

“ Lie still, and do not fatigue yourself ; you are better, and will pick up your crumbs directly, Surgeon Huntley says ; and you shall read all the great heap of letters from Eng-

land, which my husband keeps locked up in his desk ; no one else has looked at 'em, for I took them out of Mr. Vial's hands, as he was tossing them over. He is civiller grown since his wife's death, and he is going to marry the tawny woman. Now go to sleep again, do ; Surgeon Huntley says that you are to be kept ever so quiet."

" I do not want to sleep !—Tell me something more.—Mrs. Levison !"

" Don't ask about her !"

" What is the matter !—I will know. Has she been ill ?—is she—"

" O dear ! O dear ! why *cannot* you be quiet, and give over fatiguing yourself ? She is better than you or me at this minute ; but—"

" But what ? do tell me, dear, good Mrs. Bakewell !"

" They say that she is going to be married."

" Married !" screamed Walter, springing up into a sitting posture, with a vehemence which terrified his attendant ; " tell me all—at once !—I must get up—where are my clothes ?—Get out of the room—I must dress—I must see

her immediately !” but, as he spoke, he sunk back again, absolutely gibbering with faintness.

“ Do—do lie still ! and you shall hear all about it ; and then rest, won’t you ? ”Tis a young Portuguese, they say, whom she is going to marry ; and he has not a sixpence in the world, nor a shirt to his back, I dare say ;—and yet good enough for her !”

“ You are inventing tales to amuse me,” said Temple ; “ I cannot believe it ; it was but two months ago—”

“ Two months ! you have been lying here nearly that long. It is true, upon my word ; why should I tease you ? you, who was so good to my poor little Annie !” and she held up her apron to her eyes ; “ but, if you do not believe me, ask Surgeon Huntley. Why, it is the talk of all the town, how Mr. Castro is with her from morning till night—riding with her, singing with her :—no wonder at him wishing to marry the fortune ! and she won’t believe a word amiss of him. But, dear me, you look tired and faint. Here,—I will run

and fetch you a drink in a minute." Before she returned, her patient had fainted.

The news which thus reached Walter was indeed true ; and, for a wonder, neither caricatured nor exaggerated. It was true, that during Walter's mercantile journey Mrs. Levi-son had mixed a good deal in the best general society which Kingston and its neighbourhood afforded ; and that she had insensibly learned to prefer the homage which was paid to her whenever she appeared, to the selfish and secret pleasure of lonely tears and lonely musings ; that she had met Mr. Castro, at that precise moment—of all others the most critical—when she had begun to compare Temple's coldness, with the gallant and almost tender attention lavished upon her in every other quarter ; and had satisfied her own doubts as to its cause, by attributing it to a deficiency of those delicate shades of refinement which, in her heart of hearts, she prized more than nobler and bolder features of character. Castro was a true hero of romance—superbly handsome, animated, gentle ;—one who waited

not for her looks, but seemed to enter into and appreciate her most impalpable fancies intuitively, with almost chivalrous respect, and yet with that certain degree of confidence so impossible to repress by smile or frown ;— one, who in sober truth, although penniless, was fascinated by the sweetness of her face and manner, before he was stricken by *les beaux yeux de sa cassette*.

Her mind was soon so entirely occupied by this new interest, that there was little room for anything else. The remembrance of past sufferings was entirely swept away by delightful anticipations ; and her health kept pace with her happiness : and while Temple was suffering the dreamy agonies of fever, she was daily increasing in beauty, and losing some of her lately threatening symptoms. Thus it was, and from no deficiency of regard, that her enquiries after the sick man had been made by deputy. She gave herself up to the pleasing dream, with such entire purpose of heart, as ere long to become the object of popular talk. She was now, she hoped, to be compensated for all that she had suffered, forgetting,

—poor Sybil!—that it is in the heart of man where happiness dwells ; and so that the fortress is well kept, it is comparatively of little consequence how fiercely the out-works are besieged.

She was sitting, one evening, before an open lattice, wreathed round with creeping plants in luxurious profusion,—Castro was at her feet ; they had sung and talked, and were now silent, from that fullness of heart which is too engrossing to allow of speech,—when a step was heard in the anti-chamber—a feeble and unsteady step, and, after one or two unanswered knockings upon the door, it was opened softly. Both lady and gentleman looked round, angry that any one should intrude upon them, in what each felt to be the sweetest moment of life,—when, ghastly as a corpse, with his manly figure shrunk to a trembling thinness, Temple entered slowly and unassuredly. No one that had witnessed the first meeting with Mrs. Levison which has been described, would have recognized either of the two now. She had cast her mourning aside, and was dressed in white, with a few rose-coloured

trumpet flowers in her hair, and a bouquet of jessamine on her bosom,—looking younger than she really was; he, pale, spectral, and haggard, with his dim eyes, and his livid complexion, might have passed for a man of fifty,—so strangely had a few months wrought.

“ Why, Mr. Temple ! ” exclaimed she, eagerly springing from the sofa, “ I am delighted to see you abroad again ! Castro, bring that easy chair hither ; you are no stranger to Mr. Temple, Paul ;—and you, Mr. Temple, sit down ;—I forget that I should have introduced my friends to each other—no matter ; Castro, leave us for a few moments, I will call you directly—leave us ;—nay, my friend, you are not jealous ;—go—you know I will be obeyed, at least for the next few weeks ! ”

The last words were whispered, but loud enough for Walter to hear, and Castro retired reluctantly, casting looks of as much anger as annoyance, upon the intruder. He was at last gone, and Mrs. Levison looked at Temple till her beautiful eyes were filled with tears.

“ Poor—poor Walter—how ill you have been ! and I never heard of it, nor even that you had returned to Kingston, till Mr. Huntley told me that he hardly knew whether he could bring you round or not. Did you think I had forgotten you ? Do not speak yet ; you are hardly strong enough yet to come out. Believe me, that whatever changes my situation may undergo, I shall never forget your kindness.”

“ I have heard—” he began in a hoarse and broken voice.”

She blushed deeply ; and, as she beheld the agitation which cut short his words, the idea—“ then he has loved me after all !” darted across her mind, like a flash of lightning, with a sudden and keen delight, in spite of her being engaged to her new lover—so inconsistent are the feelings of one so facile in character as she was ! She looked down, and her concern to see him so embarrassed was chequered with this secret satisfaction as she replied :

“ I cannot feign, Temple ; what you may have heard is true ;—I am going to be married.”

Walter gasped with misery, and the dew stood large as pearls upon his sallow forehead.

“ Do not say so, for God’s sake ! you have not passed your word—you are not engaged ! Tell me anything but that, I entreat you ! ”

There was no time for double dealing. She looked down again, and her lips moved, though no words were audible : her confusion increased in proportion to his impetuosity.

“ I am too late !—too late ! ” cried he. “ I should have spoken long before this time, but I feared—and I hoped that I should succeed. I must speak now—I *must* give utterance to my secret. Hear me only this once, and pardon me ; and then, if you will,—never see me more ! ”

“ No ! ” replied she, rising, and gathering all her strength, while her cheek became ashy pale with emotion. “ I must not listen to this ; what I have told you is a settled thing, and past recall. If it give you pain, Temple, be sure that I must be grieved also ; but I dare not trifle with you for an instant. I shall be married within the month.”

“ O God ! ” cried he, clasping his hands, and hiding his face between them, “ that it should have come to this ! ”

“ Leave me !—leave me ! I cannot bear this ! If you are so much distressed, why has been all the vacillation in your conduct which gave me such pain ? why,” continued she, her tone growing more and more tremulous, “ such coldness as you showed towards the latter part of our voyage ?—if it be, as you would say, surely you could not have been deceived—I am too open—surely you must have known that there *was* a time—”

“ O hear me, lady ! ” exclaimed Walter, stunned by language so full of emotion, “ or I shall not be able to tell it you ! You are—you have—nay, you *must* stay — mistaken the cause of—of my present agitation ! ”

“ Mistaken ! ” repeated she, as much displeased as surprised, “ this is very strange ! what else can there be between us which should affect you so violently ? You terrify me ;—do not—I am stronger than I was, but I have not forgotten *every thing*, as some people think.”

“ Nothing but the possibility of such an

event could have wrung my secret from me ;—but I *must* go on.—Has your fancy never suggested a possibility which might—might put any *second marriage* out of the question ?”

She looked bewilderedly hither and thither, without the remotest idea of his meaning.

This is dreadful !” exclaimed Walter, “ cannot you imagine ? cannot you spare me the misery of speaking it out ? Have you never heard that it has happened that people have connived at spreading false rumours of their own deaths ?”

She had fixed her eyes upon him, as if she would devour every word which fell from his mouth. The meaning of his warning burst upon her at once. For a moment, she sat staring upon him, like one turned by horror into rigid marble ;—in the next, she fell back on the sofa, in a paroxysm of violent and horrible laughter.

“ A most wonderful joke !—and you expect me to believe that I am not a widow after all ! Castro ! Castro ! Paul ! (raising her

voice almost to a scream) come here, and help me to laugh ! come here ! make haste, and hear what he says. Colonel Levison is alive—he is not dead !—and so you can't have me after all !”

This was even more fearful than any anguish such as Temple expected would follow the communication he felt it necessary to make. The household, alarmed by the continued shrieks of their unfortunate mistress, were in the room in a moment, while Castro was supporting her, vainly endeavouring to soothe her, or to obtain some explanation from her ; and venting a thousand imprecations upon Walter for having practised upon the reason of his beloved Sybil. Temple was hardly less moved ; he would have given worlds that so hideous a task should have been laid upon any other than himself ; but it was now in vain to wish. The ruin had fallen, and he must abide to behold its desolation. In the midst of the universal clamour and confusion, his eye, as had once happened before, was caught by a face peeping over the shoul-

ders of the frightened slaves, who had crowded into the apartment. The face and the sneer were Vial's.

He rushed forward to seize him, and to demand an explanation of this strange look of pleasure, at a moment when every one else was plunged in horror ; but the man had disappeared, and his arm was at that moment forcibly caught by some one behind him. It was Castro, who exclaimed furiously :

“ By the Eternal One ! you shall not leave this house, till you have accounted to me for what you have done ! ”

“ When and whenever you please,” replied Walter, in a tone of the deepest melancholy, “ you will know the truth too soon ! ”

“ Follow me then at once ! she is in Huntley's hands, and he will summon us if he need our assistance. I will have no delay ! no evasion !—we shall be undisturbed below stairs. If it be as I suppose, you shall answer for your wickedness with your life ! ”

“ Let me go ! ” exclaimed Temple, proudly, shaking himself loose from the other's grasp. “ I am not a thief to escape you, nor an im-

postor to be afraid of you. God knows that I did not seek this—”

He stopped—for another louder peal of that unnatural laughter rung through the house. Both gentlemen shuddered, and made haste out of hearing, and Castro, opening the door of a small room, said :

“ Here, Sir ! here—you shall tell me what all this means—what you have done to insult my friend !” and, as he spoke, he drew his sword, and laid it upon the table.

“ You mistake your man, Mr. Castro,” said Temple, “ if you interpret the weakness of indisposition as timidity ;—should there be need, you might perhaps find me nearer your match than you fancy, though my arm has not yet recovered its strength. But you might have spared yourself the trouble of shewing your weapon,—you will not need it to-night.”

“ I will have an explanation—a full and entire one !” cried Castro, striking the table furiously with his clenched hand. “ If you have come hither as a rival, to disturb happiness which you were unworthy to enjoy—no—not your pale face and trembling arm shall pre-

vent me from chastising you as you deserve !”

“ You are very much in love ; and, as a foreigner, do not understand the bounds within which we are used to confine the expression of our feelings, when we speak man to man ; and I shall not resent this uncivil language until you have heard me to an end. If you should still persist to address me in a style as unbecoming to yourself as it is inappropriate, I am weak, it is true, but I will endeavour to show you how we English repress insolence. Come, Sir, be a man ;—no offence has been meant to you. Listen to me calmly, and you will see that I have only performed my duty, and feel for the struggle which it has cost me. When I tell you that I leave the island in the Carribbee, it should settle the question of our rivalry at once and for ever.”

“ Well, Sir, I suppose I must hear you, though I confess myself unable to imagine whither all this is tending.”

Temple, in as concise a form of words as possible, firmly and kindly recapitulated all the facts of his story, as far as concerned his

connection with Colonel Levison, the sudden death of the latter, the numerous appearances which he had seen, the rumours current among the peasantry residing in the scenes of his former exploits ; he mentioned the anonymous letter, his own visit to Levison Court, and Vial's unguarded talk on shipboard ; and gave such a sketch of the wickedness and whimsicality of the deceased, as made any freak, however monstrous, not incredible. Castro listened to him, at first with insolent scorn—then haughty impatience ; this subsided into toleration, and this changed to attention, which, as the narrative proceeded, became restlessly intense.

“ Thus far,” continued Walter, “ I have mentioned only conjectures ; but I have received a few lines in my last packet of letters from England, which bring the matter far nearer to a certainty, and offer a clue, which I will make it my business to follow to an end, immediately upon my return. Here is the letter ; read it for yourself, and then tell me as a gentleman, whether I have done more than my duty in entreating Mrs. Levison to

pause, at least, before she rushes on a step which may subject her to so much future misery."

Castro took the letter, and attempted to read it; his agitation was so great, that the paper twice dropped from his hands before he could master its contents.

"And are you going to England," cried he, starting up, "in the Carribbee?"

"I am; and will lose no time, after my arrival, in tracing this matter out."

"You shall be troubled no farther," replied he, haughtily; "as Mrs. Levison's dearest friend, the investigation of this matter belongs to me. I shall also take my passage in the Carribbee, and make it my business to discover whether you have been fooled by a parcel of old women's tales, or whether this fiend in human form be yet alive;—if he be, he has a long account to settle, if not—"

"The question will be at rest for ever. You will do right, Mr. Castro, in repairing to England without delay;—it *is* your business. With respect to the feelings with which you may re-

gard me, I am indifferent—for I know that one day you will learn to know me better.”

“ No, Sir, never !” replied Castro, setting his teeth firmly together, while his eyes gleamed as fiercely as those of some wild animal meditating a spring ; “ were you to be proved right a thousand times over, it would not in the least alter my opinion of your interference. You have destroyed more happiness than ever the world saw before. We might have gone on in blessed ignorance to the end of our lives. What are your trumpery English laws to me ? Sybil is mine—mine only ;—and I hate you, and shall hate the sight of you for ever ! You have done your best to divide those who are already united. You shall not, you *cannot* prevail ; but, for your endeavour’s sake, may every curse and blight fall upon your favourite schemes—above all, in the matter of your affections !—and they assuredly will ! ”

He snatched up his sword as he spoke, and made his way out of the room. It was well for the maintenance of peace, that Walter was weakened by illness,—otherwise, his com-

passion might not have entirely restrained him from resenting the passion of a spirit chafed beyond its power to bear. His thoughts too, were more upon Mrs. Levison than Castro ; and he eagerly awaited the appearance of Huntley, who brought him tidings not so hopelessly bad as might have been expected. His patient had raved herself into a state of insensibility, and had fallen into a heavy sleep ; but she might (and the supposition was a dreadful one) awake to a return of those fearful paroxysms—or this slumber, induced by a sedative, might wear away all the frenzy at once. But, in any case, nothing could be looked forward to but wretchedness—a misery which must be protracted for many months, perhaps even a life ; and it required all Temple's high sense of right to sustain him against the unjust self-reproach of having acted indiscreetly. Fortunately, for his peace of mind, the better chance happened, and she awoke after a sleep of eighteen hours, keenly alive to her wretchedness, it is true, but calm and tearful.

Miserable as this was, it amounted to some

comfort ; and Walter was gratified to hear that she had strength of mind enough to limit herself to one interview with Castro, in which she expressed her full approbation of his voyage to England, and declared her intention of retiring into the country, and entirely secluding herself from society until the truth should be ascertained. The day before they sailed, Walter received a slip of paper, on which were these words written by her own hand, " I forgive you ! " He had hardly expected even this much, from his knowledge of her vehement character.

Never did he feel a stronger sensation of relief than at the moment when his foot felt the deck of the Carribbee beneath him. There was not a soul in Jamaica whom he cared to leave, save Mrs. Levison, to be in whose neighbourhood was a trial, and the Bakewells, whose gratitude had been unceasing, and one of whom wept to take her leave of him, and declared that she could never do enough for her little Annie's friend ; and yet the homeward voyage promised nothing but restraint and trial ;—how different was it from the last

which he had undertaken ! His sole fellow-passenger was a man who had good cause to avoid him as much as possible, and whose anger did not follow the established rule of being as short-lived as it was violent. To complete the matter, Vial had been sent by Mrs. Levison to attend upon her friend, and Walter shrewdly suspected that he was not the only contribution she had made towards the comfort of Castro's voyage. The captain of the Caribbee was a rude and surly man—the weather rough ; and all these annoyances bore doubly hard upon Temple, from the precarious state of his health, which, however, the sea-blasts seemed to amend.

The first week of the voyage passed heavily to all on board. Temple had hoped to have come to a better understanding with Castro, but his hopes were disappointed as often as they were made. The promise of perpetual hatred seemed in a fair way of being kept—whenever they chanced to meet suddenly, and face to face, the Portuguese darted such a scowl from under his shaggy eyebrows, as told that his passion was only just kept under.

With all this sullenness, Walter could not but be sorry for him,—he had no resources,—no occupation, save to brood over his own disquietude,—and would tramp up and down the deck for hours together, with a quick impatient step, trying to sing, that no one might guess the misery he was enduring. The daily collision with his unwilling enemy seemed to exasperate his feelings to such a point, that Temple was compelled to look forward to a time when they would break out with a fury, which would demand stern and peremptory notice.

It was a brilliant moonlight night,—and Walter imagined himself to be alone on deck, save for the man at the helm. He was musing on present, past, and future, and trying, with a strange perseverance, to reconcile the identity of the boy, so wild, ungovernable and aimless, with the man, who, at least, attempted to submit his conduct to the influence of some regulating principle. From this subject of contemplation, he passed to another,—his hand in his bosom fell upon Isabella Lesage's letter, and he smiled to find how different a guise her

image wore now, from the one in which it used to rise before him during his last voyage, as contrasted with the brilliant Mrs. Levison. Whilst he stood, hours passed unheeded, as on the former night, when his reveries had been interrupted by Vial. He was leaning over the vessel's side, looking on the glittering waves without seeing them, and feeling the breeze without hearing it,—when a sudden splash and plunge announced to the man at the helm, that some one had fallen overboard ;—and when he looked to the spot where Temple had been standing, there was no one to be seen !

PART VII.

THE HEIRESS AND HER MAID.

“IF ever there was a provoking girl on the face of this earth, it is my niece, Isabella Lesage!—It is really enough to put any one past his patience to hear her talk; as if a fortune of forty thousand pounds was a thing of no consequence, to say nothing of the blood that is in her veins. Here she is, losing her time in this upstart good-for-nothing place, when she might marry into the peerage, if she was only seen, who knows?—and, as if that would not content her, must needs go to Dale Hall, to spend her Christmas with those Roystons!—How I hate obstinate people!—

I was always the most persuadable creature in the world, poor dear Lesage used to say"—and here the widow paused, as much for lack of breath, as lack of audience.

Meanwhile, Isabella was enjoying herself as quietly as if she had still been a poor woman, and, in spite of the disturbances which had annoyed the inhabitants of Dale Hall, during her last visit there, was very happy under its roof. The nocturnal noises, however, had, for the present, utterly ceased, and no more appearances of wicked men clad in blue uniforms were to be seen, had she paid them the compliment of sitting up all the night to receive them. Even Cicely's budget of wonders contained only the old stock of tales,—cook and warming-pan included. Mrs. Royston no longer spoke of removing, "because of the hobgoblins," as the country people had declared she intended. There was the usual dance to be given in Christmas week,—the house to be dressed up with yew and holly, and other evergreen shrubs,—and the weather most seasonably bright and frosty. Mrs. Lesage positively refused to be buried alive

even for her dear Isabella's sake ; and the latter was obliged to endure the mournfulness of her tomb alone, though, to all appearance, never was lady merrier in her sepulchre.

I say, to all appearance, because, though her outward demeanour was at its gayest, she had her moments of serious thought when alone. She was not one of those who could fall into the possession of a fortune as they would join a country dance, and enjoy it without thinking of any thing beyond the amusement of the passing hour. Without any parade or affectation, she felt the responsibilities attached to great riches, sometimes to a degree which made her question the possibility of happiness being in the power of the wealthy. She was anxious for a little breathing time ;—a little temporary retirement, wherein she might make up her plans for the future,—and, disregarding all her aunt's schemes of aggrandizement, looked forward with solicitude as well as hope.

Her resolution to remain in the country was as unpleasing to another, as it had been to her aunt,—that other being Mrs. Vial, whom Isabella had taken as maid, from the kind motive

of a wish to provide her with the shelter of a respectable home while her husband was absent from England. She protested, as much as an Abigail dared, against such a strange plan as her lady had adopted. Miss Lesage would have dismissed her from her service at once, as she had early to discover that her maid, except as far as concerned the business of her toilette, was weak, frivolous, and deceitful, had she not also discovered that Mrs. Vial bore about with her that fearful malady, the end whereof is almost always certain death,—to speak plainly, an incipient cancer. The medical men had declared that her only chance for life, or even an extension of her days, laid in living generously, and being treated gently, and refraining from any severe labour ; and these, Isabella was resolved to ensure her, at the price of so much of her own personal comfort. The poor silly creature was so unconscious or so reckless of her danger, that she even regarded her continuance with Isabella rather as a proof of her own cleverness, than the Christianity of her mistress. To

listen to her prate was as much as the latter could bear with any thing like patience ;—it was so completely the overflowings of a vain and crooked mind : a mixture of flattery and gossip which was positively past endurance. She would chatter away to Isabella for hours together, in spite of all prohibition and absence of reply, in the nauseous and antiquated style of declaring that “she had been never so happy before ;—so pleasant it was to serve such a sweet and liberal lady,” and the like.

“Have done, Vial!” cried Isabella, one evening, cutting her short in the most flowery of her flowery harangues :—“you know that such nonsense is what I will not listen to. I shall be compelled to part with you, if you cannot contrive to rein in your tongue ;—and though I should be sorry to do so ; I will, most assuredly.”

“Part with me, Ma’am !—O you could not think of such a thing !—me, who does your hair so beautiful—to be sure, such hair as it is !”

“Cannot you refrain for one moment ?—

You should remember, with your life, in such a precarious state as it is, that it is not the time for falsehood and flattery."

"My life!—O Ma'am!—you do not mean to say that you think I shall die?"

"You know that I am acquainted with the full extent of your case,—and I know—Vial, I am in serious earnest,—that such complaints are rarely cured without an operation, which Doctor Goodrich does not recommend."

"O Ma'am—don't! don't!—I should die if one of them surgeons was to touch me!" cried Vial, looking as if she was going to faint;—"but you are not in earnest, surely?"

"I am indeed," replied Isabella gravely:—"and I say so, that you may take the matter to heart. I will also tell you why I retain you in my service:—simply to give you the advantage of such remedies as are in the reach of the rich. You should reflect upon this,—you should try to bring your mind into a more proper state than this frivolity, of which you never seem to be weary. You should look at the *possibility* of your dying soon, for your children's sake—for your husband's"—

“Dying!—O Lord have mercy upon me!—But I don’t feel like it at all ma’am!—Thomas—Mrs. Royston’s man said to me last night,—Dear, dear! how you are creasing that good satin!—do let me fold it up properly.”

“Cannot you be serious while I am speaking to you?” continued her mistress, yet more severely;—“cannot you comprehend that it is for no gain, for no pleasure of my own that I am saying this?—that if you were to die to-morrow, I should be neither better nor worse? Have you forgotten what Doctor Goodrich told you?”

“O ma’am! Doctor Goodrich indeed! I put no faith in him at all—there’s those in this neighbourhood that know better.”

Isabella was very near losing her patience at the continued impenetrability of the woman, and to keep the small remnant which remained, said no more. And to judge by Mrs. Vial’s demeanour next morning, her mistress might have spared her remonstrance, for any good that it had effected. She resolved then no longer to endure the daily annoyance of her attendance, and that night to inform her maid

that they must part. That night, the Christmas dance was to take place. The house was thrown open to all the inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood, gentle and simple,—for Mrs. Royston, in spite of the remonstrances of “her genteel daughter Arnold,” would keep up old customs. There was music provided in the shape of a fiddler, whose powers of continuance the mighty Paganini himself might not disdain to envy:—a supper, which a town audience would have regarded as provisions for a month, and yet it proved no more than was manageable by the hearty guests,—and merry faces, both of young and old, enough to charm a smile from the most splenetic.

Mr. Le Beaumont was one of the party. Dale Parish adjoined the one in which Levison Court was situated. Isabella, whose enjoyment was always more contemplative than active, soon withdrew from the dance, and entertained herself by beholding it from a distance. He presently joined her.

“Is not this a lively scene?” said he, “or are you so completely accustomed to take

pleasure in town amusements, as to perceive the coarseness of it, compared with them, rather than the gaiety."

"Far from it," replied she eagerly, "I am as much interested in looking on, as I am *not* in a common-place town party; the very sight of those groups of people is exhilarating. Perhaps, as you do not dance, you will give me your arm, and let us walk about a little."

Mr. Le Beaumont was pleased with the frankness of her manner, and they mixed with the crowd; the Priest often stopping to exchange a kind word with some one or other of his flock. "Who would think," said he at last, unconsciously, "that we are in a haunted house?"

Isabella was struck by his tone, nor less by the enquiry which followed. "You knew Mr. Temple of —, did you not?"

Miss Lesage replied in the affirmative.

"And I think," continued he, "that you made some extraordinary communication to him, before he left England?"

"May I ask how you became acquainted with the circumstance?"

“Certainly ; hoping that you will in turn, answer my next inquiry—of course you will not mention the circumstance. Mr. Temple came over to Levison Court, on that same evening, and told me. I should be very much obliged by a sight of that note, if you have kept it, and could find it without much trouble.”

“Nay then, Mr. Le Beaumont, excuse me if I put question for question, and ask you whether you suspect that you know the writer?”

“I do ; but you must not ask me how I made the discovery, remembering that my connexion with my flock prevents my replying to any such enquiry. You have a maid servant, have you not, whose name is Florence Vial?”

“O Mr. Le Beaumont ! is it possible that she can have written it ? She cannot write, and is so stupid that she declares she has no wish to learn.”

“Has she told you that she cannot write?”

“Yes.”

“Then she has deceived you ; I have seen

her sign her name. Is this," he produced the fly-leaf of a book, on which the words were rudely scrawled, "is this at all like the handwriting of the note?"

Isabella was at once struck by the resemblance, there was a particular turn in the E, which almost amounted to identity, though some pains had evidently been taken to disguise it. To make assurance doubly sure, however, she ran up stairs, and brought down the document in question. They examined it carefully, and there remained not a doubt upon the minds of either, that the writing was the work of the same hand.

"Where is Vial?" exclaimed Isabella, "I have not noticed her among the dancers,—I will lose no time in investigating the matter."

"Be careful what you do," replied the Priest; "you may depend upon it that the woman has acted under influence, and that she must have strong reasons for secrecy. I am clear that we have the clue, to this and much more foul play of a similar kind; but to use it rightly will require delicacy and discretion:—and I am comforted to think that Mr. Temple

is already too much upon his guard to take any rash step of marriage—”

“ Any rash step of marriage !” exclaimed Cicely Royston, gaily approaching them, “ did you ever hear the like ?—and from you, Mr. Le Beaumont, who couldn’t marry if you would. Fie upon you !—fie !—and you, Isabella, ought to know better than to flirt with the reverend father !”

“ You have been too lavish of your attentions towards the gay young farmers to have any right to reflect upon your neighbours, Cicely—but have you seen my maid Vial among the crowd ?”

“ I ?—no, and I wonder what can have become of the smart pink cap which she was trimming up, I suspect for ‘Thomas’ benefit. He too is absent, I perceive—no, yonder is his plum coloured coat just peeping in at the door, and without her, which is a wonder. Will you not dance again, Isabella—do—Sir Roger de Coverley ?”

“ I am tired, and would rather look on—and I shall retire very soon ; but, see, they are standing up,—make haste, Cicely, or you will lose your place.”

Cicely found the temptation of that merry old dance even greater than the pleasure of trying to find out what Mr. Le Beaumont could have been saying to Miss Lesage, that made her look so earnest.

“It is very strange,” resumed the Priest, growing grave when she was gone, “and not like an occurrence of the times in which we live—that one, whose death so many witnessed—should be rumoured, and believed by some, to be yet alive,—and what the wretched man could mean by remaining in England, save to cause as much confusion as possible, I cannot guess.”

“He was considered partially insane, was he not?” said Isabella, to whom the subject was very interesting.

“Why, my dear young lady, I cannot stretch my charity so far as to imagine it; because, if so, any wickedness which profligate men choose to commit, might be explained away at once, in the same manner. He was wickedly disposed from his youth upwards, and never so well pleased as when he could raise a laugh, by giving some one else pain or disappoint-

ment. I could tell you a thousand stories of his diabolical proceedings. This hall, itself, has witnessed not a few; and could his spirit return any where, it would—but what do you see yonder?”

“Nothing,” replied Isabella, shuddering, as she recollected herself; “but fancy can do strange things, and I almost thought that yonder fine picture was changed into that hideous one, with the blue uniform, which you pointed out to me, when I was at Levison Court.”

At this moment some one touched Miss Lesage’s arm. It was one of the maid-servants, with, “If you please, Ma’am, Mrs. Vial is very ill up-stairs in your dressing-room, and cries out for you at no rate. Will you be so good as to come and see what is the matter—such fits, Ma’am!”

Isabella made haste up-stairs, and found that the maid’s account fell short of the truth—Vial was in a pitiable state. She must have been out in the hail-shower, for her hair was wet, and her lower garments dripping, and spotted with mud. Her gay bonnet had brought home the running branch of a bram-

ble, and was tossed in a shattered state, upon the floor. She was by turns weeping, laughing, pushing away every one that came near her, and screaming for them not to leave her. Her mistress perceived that this was only a hysteric affection, brought on by some sudden fright, and approached her, with that tone of quiet decision which rarely fails in its effect. "Vial, I must have you tied unless you will be calmer, and allow Nanny to undress you and put you to bed; you shall sleep in my bed, and I will watch you."

"O Miss Lesage! Miss Lesage! O my dear mistress!—hold me! keep my hands fast!—I shall die—I know I shall—I am sure of it!"

"You must keep yourself quiet, or as Mr. Le Beaumont is, most luckily, down stairs, I will call him up!"

"O no doctor! no doctor!—I shall die soon enough without one, I know I shall! O pray let nobody come in!"

"If you will allow Nanny to undress you, nobody shall come in, otherwise I must send for Mr. Le Beaumont; we cannot allow you to disturb the house in this wild way."

But the dread of Mr. Le Beaumont, and the resolution of Isabella's manner, had the desired effect. A copious shower of tears followed this burst of agitation, and after Vial had been put to bed she grew calmer, as long as her mistress remained in sight. Miss Lesage resolved upon watching her;—and refusing entrance to any one, (for she was satisfied that there was no danger), she made up her fire, and drawing an easy chair close to it, sate down to read—occasionally looking up from her book, to see if the sedative which she had administered was taking effect.

But sleep did not come :—Mrs. Vial, like the Baron of Smaylhome's lady, “tossed and turned,” and continued to exhibit every possible sign of vigilance and anxiety. At length, when an hour or two had been thus spent, and the night was fast advancing towards morning, she called her mistress to her bed-side, with, “If you please, Ma'am, and will not be angry—I have something to tell you.”

Isabella was ready and curious to hear.

“I know I shall die, Ma'am,” continued her maid in a tone far different from her usually

flippant one, “and so it is of no use to hide any thing; I am sure that I shall die!”

“Why, Vial, this is being as much too gloomy as you were too giddy last night—had you not better go to sleep?”

“O Ma’am! I am going to die! and must tell you *all*! for all I did not seem to care last night, I was frightened enough to hear you talk, and I had heard the servants talking about the famous Manks conjurer who is here, Ma’am, and can cure every thing, they say; and so, Ma’am, I asked Thomas if he would take me, and I would slip out unknown to-night, while the rest of them were dancing, and see what he could do for me.”

“O Vial! Vial!—have you been so silly as to go out on such a cold night as this, after all I have said to you—and to find a conjuror?”

“Yes, sure, Ma’am, he’s a wonderful man, I heard them telling in the servant’s hall—how he had cured Mrs. Bimson’s child that was begrudged.”

“Begrudged?”

“Yes, ma’am, with an evil eye—some one begrudged her, and she could not walk, for

all she is twelve years old, and they took her to this same old Barrow Wenn, and he said a verse over her—and gave Mrs. Bimson a bottle,—and the child was getting so well and strong, and could nearly walk, only it fell out of bed, and hurted itself, and so it died.”

“ And is it possible that you believe all this ?”

“ And so, Ma’am,” continued Vial, too intent upon her own story, to notice the question, “ Thomas took me, as soon as they was all set to dancing—such a lonesome way as we went ! through what they call Pembo Wood :—and the wind making such a dismal sound !—But he cheered me up as well as he could. He’s a kind man, that Thomas.—Well, and so at last we got to the Wood end, and he showed me a light, as if a little candle was burning, on the other side of the ploughed field, and he said, ‘ You must go alone.—He lives yonder !’—I said, I dared not,—but he told me he would stand at the gate, and watch me all the way, and I had come so far, and got so wet, it was a pity to come back without

having my fortune told,—and then I unthought me, that I had best go by myself, lest Thomas should guess what I was after.”

“ And you went on ?”

“ Well, Ma’am, and so I left him standing at the gate—poor Thomas !—with his lanthorn—and I scrambled across the field any how, till I came to the other side on the common-edge :—O dear, such a dismal place !—for the moon was cut, and I could see very well. He lives in a sod hut—you never saw such a hole ; fit only for a savage to live in !—and I was in such a twitter I durst not knock at the door for many a minute. But he opened it himself. He *knewed* that I was there ! O Ma’am, such a wonderful man ! with a long white beard. They say that he is a hundred years old !”

“ Well, and what did he say to you,” enquired her mistress, curious to hear the sequel, in spite of her vexation at the woman’s absurdity.

“ O Ma’am ! he knewed all about me !—He told me what it was I wanted, and how my husband was in foreign parts, and he said the

Doctors was a parcel of book-learned heathens, and that he would touch it for me with a dead man's hand,—and it would get well directly !”

Isabella could not help relieving herself of her disgust with an involuntary gesture, but her maid did not perceive it, and went on eagerly :

“ And so he took it out of a box, Ma'am. It was for all the world like a claw, so yellow and dry !—There were two in the box ;—I suppose he keeps one on purpose for children,—and he touched me with it :—I felt as cold—all over chill !—and he asked me a deal of questions, and told me that I should be in a house of my own before this time next year, and he writ me a charm, Ma'am, and told me not to show it to no one ;—so you must not ask to see it, Ma'am.”

“ And then you came home ?”

“ O now comes the dreadfulest thing !—Well, some how or other, Thomas had forgot me, or thought I should be longer : for when I got to the gate, he was not there ;—but was walking up and down the wood, I could see by his lanthorn, whistling, to keep himself warm. I called, and called, but he did not

hear me :—the wind was making such a noise ! Just then, the moon came out, all of a sudden : when I heard something come stride, striding behind me, and I looked back—I wonder what made me !—and there he was !

“ He !—do you mean the conjuror ? ”

“ O Ma’am, no !—the wicked Colonel.”

“ What !—whom do you mean ? ”

“ Colonel Levison, Ma’am !—I knewed his figure too well !—Many’s the time I’ve seen him, to my cost, and many a one beside me. Well, Ma’am, there he was stride, striding close behind me, and just as he was close up, Thomas, it seems, unbethought him, and was turning back. I tried to speak, but gave such a screech—I hear myself yet !—and I ran against Thomas quite in an extacy. ‘ What’s to be done now, Mrs. Vial ? ’ said he, quite cool,—for he thought I had lost my wits :—and when I told him,—there was nothing, he said,—and sure enough, he *was* gone :—but I saw the wicked Colonel, I am sure ! It was for a warning ;—they say he always comes back before some one is going to die, and I am sure it must be me ! ”

“But Vial, this is a very strange story of yours:—do you mean to say that you saw Colonel Levison or his ghost?”

“O Ma’am! what else *could* it be?—and why he should trouble me, I know not!—The Lord have mercy upon me!”

“And yet,” continued Isabella, looking steadily upon her maid, to discover how much of this terror was real or feigned,—“some say he is not dead yet. Who told *you* so? and bade you write to me? You must confess every thing to me—for you are fully discovered!”

O Ma’am! forgive me, forgive me this once, and I will never do the like again, and tell you all—indeed I will,—about the letter. You know, Ma’am, my husband is Mrs. Levison’s man servant. Well, I took such a fancy as never was to go to Jamaica with her—and she would not have me. I suppose some one had been telling her tales of me. She must needs set up Mrs. Alexander, as if she could dress her head, let alone washing lace,—and—I said I would be revenged upon her!”

“And that was the way you took?”

“I am telling you every thing, Ma’am, just

as it happened. My husband and me never agreed well,—and he was always talking about this and t’other he would do, if Mrs. Levison married Mr. Temple. He was as ill off against him, as I was against her :—now I liked him—for he was civil to me, and knew how Vial used to beat me !—That Colonel Levison did a bad job **w**hen he made us marry together.”

“And you would yet have gone out to Jamaica in his company?—Your story does not agree with itself—I cannot understand it.”

“O Ma’am! any thing better than being left at home, and having to work so,—and the Doctors said it would be good for my complaint :—and I had not heard of this place then, or I would’nt have wished to go no where !”

“I am sadly afraid, Vial, that you are trying to deceive me. Take care what you do ;—if you are to die, how would you like that one of the last acts of your life should be a deliberate falsehood?—Was this your *only* reason for writing that note?—Did your husband know of it, in the least?—Answer me—or I shall put the affair into Mr. Le Beaumont’s hands.”

“O Ma’am, the Priest has knewed it ever since I came here, and he charged me to tell you, but I was afraid you would be so angry. O no, Ma’am!—my husband would’nt have done nothing to stop the marriage! He would have half killed me, if he had guessed a bit about it.”

“Do you think that your husband suspected that Colonel Levison was alive?”

“Indeed, Ma’am, I cannot say:—he was so close over every thing.—Alive, Ma’am!—O no, it is *unpossible*!—I saw his spirit, and so fierce, with those terrible flaming eyes!—It was an unlucky day when he was born! If I had never seen him, I should not have been lying here what I am;—and my husband would have been a decent post-boy still.”

“A post-boy!” exclaimed Isabella, upon whose mind new light darted;—“was he then the person whom Colonel Levison employed when he was running away with his wife?”

“He was, Ma’am;—and I wonder Mr. Temple never found it out:—to be sure, he was in such a state that night!—and as for Doctor Goodrich, dear me! he’d never find out

nothing.—But O, how cold I feel ! all of a shiver—I am sure I shall die !”

Isabella administered a cordial to the poor woman, who presently began to dose. Not so her mistress:—she busied herself in noting down Mrs. Vial’s precise words ; and teased by the explanation which seemed to deepen rather than diminish the mystery, spent the remainder of the night without slumber. The conviction of the possibility that Colonel Levi-son might yet be alive, acquired some strength from the disclosures made by her servant. Why, with the hatred which Vial had conceived towards Temple, should he have wished to forward a match which promised happiness and prosperity to the young merchant, unless he were like some dark shadow, lurking in the back ground, waiting for a moment when he might come forward successfully to execute his revenge. The idea was fearfully fascinating,—and consonant with all that she had heard of the Colonel’s schemes and achievements ; which, likewise, were some of them sufficiently flagrant to make him anxious to elude the grasp of Justice, by remaining concealed. She

resolved to communicate with Temple, as well as Mr. Le Beaumont, feeling, that in a matter whereon so much might depend, she *dared not* withhold any discovery from the parties most concerned.

As soon, therefore, as it was possible, she made the Priest acquainted with the substance of Mrs. Vial's communication, which, in every respect, coincided with the tale Mr. Le Beaumont had gathered from her own lips ; and she was of too weak a character to be consistent in a lie had she possessed wit sufficient to invent one.

Her health had received a severe shock in the cold which she caught during her night-walk, and the physicians declared her case to be almost hopeless, unless she could at once be removed to a milder air. Bath was mentioned as a place which might be of use, and Isabella, though she had resisted the idea of being carried thither "as an heiress, with a diamond label about her neck," was willing to take the journey at once, for the sake of keeping alive one so worthless, and yet, one whom it might be of some consequence to be able to

produce on a future day. She was scantily repaid by any gratitude on the part of the sufferer :—and Mrs. Lesage was unsparing of her sneers. “ This was always her niece’s odd way ! never to notice advice, and yet to take it after all !—and she could pretend to go to Bath for the sake of her maid, as if any one was likely to believe it !—Let alone your quiet young ladies for not caring for lovers !—Isabella was only a woman !” —and the like.

With the information conveyed to Temple was another piece of news, yet more important, added by Mr. Le Beaumont. Barrow Wenn’s reign had been presently brought to a close, by those sturdy and incredulous guardians of the public good, y’clept Justices of the Peace. He was seized in the midst of all his trumpery, in the very act of fortune-telling, and straightway lodged in Bridewell :—nor did the health of the neighbourhood suffer much from the abstraction of the sage, in spite of his furious and solemn denunciations. It was discovered upon examination, in fact, from his own confession, that the two withered hands, where-with he had been used to minister healing to

the sick, had been stolen from the chapel at Levison Court ;—the said Barrow Wenn proving to be a run-away sexton, one of the establishment of the wicked Colonel. The Priest examined the hands with eagerness :—there was nothing wanting to the completeness of the pair. Here was matter for fresh doubt !—

It cost Isabella a severe struggle before she could make up her mind to intrude herself upon Walter's notice ;—and the more so, because, since he had left England, she had begun to suspect herself of entertaining, with respect to him, such feelings as no woman likes to own towards any man, in the first instance. She was vigilant in the task of self-examination, and had early discovered the entrance of this intruding fancy, and distressed herself no little, by thinking how her interference *might* be interpreted. But her innate uprightness, and the consciousness of her own integrity came to her relief ;—she felt that she could acquit herself of any mean or selfish motive, and this being once established, she fulfilled her duty with a simplicity and brevity

which could not, she hoped, be misunderstood. She then dismissed the matter from her mind, and, by way of aiding in the diversion of her thoughts, allowed herself to join in more of the gaieties of Bath than she would, at another time, have entered into; and subjected herself to her aunt's public praise and private remark of "Such an odd girl!—*She* pretend not to be fond of amusement!"

The primary object of her visit to the city of wits and waters was not answered. Mrs. Vial sunk rapidly under the cold which was not to be thrown off, and sunk, without even a temporary show of rallying. The approach of Death, when first it was fairly set before her, was most terrific to the weak and ignorant woman, and Isabella was thankful that it was in the power of a Priest, who was summoned to her bedside,—to awaken her serious thoughts, while he allayed this more than childish terror. She was brought to some sense of the folly and worthlessness of her past life. She exhibited so much of maternal propriety, as to shudder at the idea of her sons coming under the influence of their father:—and so much of

gratitude as repeatedly to acknowledge in poor but sincere language, her sense of what she owed to her humane mistress, whose forbearance was thus smoothing her death-bed, and who promised to befriend the children whom she left behind. It was only a few days before she died, that she assured Miss Lesage, with great solemnity, that her statement with respect to the anonymous letter was, in every respect, true :—and, at last, she expired in a sudden convulsion, a few moments after she had been expressing how comfortable her mind was now, and how little she should wish to be recalled to the temptations of life. Let us hope that, in this matter, she was not self-deceived !

Isabella protracted her residence in Bath. She found amusement in its constantly changing society, and was of a nature to be unwilling to remove from a spot when once settled in it. It was a pleasant novelty for one who had passed a youth of such reserve, to try a different scene :—it was delightful to make any one so happy, as she made Cicely Royston, by summoning her to share in the

gaities of that gay city, and she could afford to listen to her aunt's murmurings at the impolicy of the invitation. "As if two young women were not always in each others' way!—and some called Cicely pretty;—for *her* part, she thought her forward and vulgar looking, and what was more, the Honourable Mr. Towerham thought so, and *said* so too!"

This Honourable Mr. Towerham was well nigh as acceptable to Mrs. Lesage, as a Levi-son would have been, in days of yore, for many and good reasons. He was of good family—still handsome, and always gentlemanly. He rode well—drove well;—talked well—understood every game under the sun,—(and some which only make their appearance when "the owl is abroad,")—and above all, admired Isabella, and her eighty thousand pounds. Mrs. Lesage did not care which; for some how or other, while the little pennyless country maiden was winning hearts by the score, Isabella had less to answer for than most heiresses. As her aunt had said "she spoke out, and made the men afraid of her." Therefore, a regular admirer, who met her

frankness with an equal absence of reserve, and yet a good gentlemanly taste which was sure to keep its owner clear of all offence,—one who abstained from compliments—who attended them upon all tenable occasions, and declared “that she was the most refined and intellectual young person whom he had met for the last twenty years,” (for the Honourable Mr. Towerham owned that he had reached that point, at which, so sings Doctor Young, (‘a man owns himself to be a fool’)—an admirer so thorough-going as to satisfy the aunt, and yet so discreet in his advances as not to alarm the niece, was a real prize, and treated accordingly.

It is at once, one of the pleasures and difficulties of acquaintanceship, that it is often entered into so imperceptibly, that the past habits and pursuits of the parties are taken upon trust—and not discovered, until both have gone too far to recede, and either find that they are fast approaching intimacy with those who are unsuited to them, if not ineligible as intimates, or, it may be, (and how delightful is such a discovery !) that they have

entertained angels unawares. Mr. Towerham had been more than usually fond of play, though he had totally neglected it, since Isabella had crossed his path. It was said, that he was so skilful and fortunate as to have entirely foiled a professed gamester with his own weapons; and the latter was so dreadfully chagrined, as much from envy at his antagonist's skill, as the ruin caused by his own enormous losses, that he had addicted himself to the most unrestrained intemperance, which partially affected his reason. Mrs. Lesage had gathered this rumour among much other scandal—but—worldly and wicked woman!—purposely refrained from repeating the anecdote to her niece. She satisfied her conscience with the never-failing “Isabella was *so* odd!—she would certainly make some open and unpleasant quarrel with him, and *she* really could not spare Towerham,—he was such an obliging creature!”

Things had reached the point when a daily visit was ventured by the gentleman and received by the ladies—graciously, as regarded Mrs. Lesage—courteously, as far as Isabella

was concerned—when, one morning, Cicely Royston burst into the room, with an open letter in her hand.

“ From Mrs. Arnold ?” said Mrs. Lesage, who never liked Cicely so well as when she had received one of her sister’s epistles, which, to do them justice, were tolerably faithful chronicles of local gossip.

“ Such news, Isabella !” cried Cicely, “ such strange, sad news ! come up to your dressing-room, and we will read it together.”

“ One of Cicely’s mysteries, I suppose,” said Isabella, gravely smiling as she laid her book aside ; “ do not look so unhappy, my dear aunt ; it will be common property long before dinner time. Mr. Towerham, I wish you good morning ;” and she withdrew to listen to the letter, little imagining how much its contents were calculated to shake her nerves.

“ Now, to any one who does not know her ways as well as I do, Mr. Towerham,” said the widow, apologetically, “ Isabella would seem curious as well as abrupt ; but, dear

girl, it is all her amiability!—just to humour that child—What can she see in the girl, I wonder? but, dear Mr. Towerham, do come here and tell me who ever is this queer figure in the street below, making *such* antics—and it does not appear for money?”

The gentleman came to the window, to look at the object of Mrs. Lesage's wonder. This was a man who might either be forty-five or sixty-five years old, who was walking or rather grimacing in the fresh spring sunshine which filled half the street; and, though emaciated by illness, as was evident from his dreadful complexion and shrunken figure, was executing such strange gambols and uttering such discordant cries, as it must have required considerable strength to produce. His appearance was as fantastic as his demeanour; his head was bare, and his long white hair tossed hither and thither on the buoyant wind. He was clad in a faded scarlet hunting jacket, with outside pockets, from each of which dangled a coarse and gaudy cotton handkerchief; his waistcoat also might have been purchased from a decayed Nimrod—it was

of brown fustian, whilom olive green, faded, and rubbed, and stained with riding and reveling,—and so large, that its tenant might easily have admitted his double to participate in its benefits. His breeches—a relic of Ridottos and assemblies of other days—did as strict justice to his thighs, as his waistcoat was ample ; his hose had been of fine brown silk, *en suite*, now darned into a perfect mosaic with many coloured worsteds—and his feet clattered in loose dingy slippers. His aspect was vicious in the extreme ;—now he stood clenched up against a wall in dogged silence—then, he would burst out into something between a scream and a song—and, swearing most horribly, pursue with stick and stone, any child who had looked at him as he passed, or, more audacious, had ventured some sneer at his gay coat and bare head.

“ Dear, what a frightful object !” cried Mrs. Lesage, who was not too much shocked to be very curious. “ See, he is chewing something. I should not like to meet him ; why do the magistrates allow him to go at large ? Do you know who he is, Mr. Towerham ?”

“ Her companion was not so callous as to be able to answer without some hesitation. “ Did you ever hear of Corby, the gamester ?” said he at last , “ but I forget—you are not one of the regular frequenters of Bath—and this is too painful ! let us withdraw,”—for just at that moment, the keen eye of the temporary madman had been caught by the sun glancing upon the buttons of the gentleman’s coat, and he had sprung into the middle of the street, capering and singing aloud a wicked song with a burden such as :

I and the Devil and Death—a goodly three
Shall come, my bonny boy, and dwell with thee !

“ And that is Corby ?” exclaimed the heartless widow, putting up her glass to take a last look as she retreated, that she might not *seem* unfeeling. There was no retreating from the hearing of his cries, and the shouts of the mob which was beginning to gather. Mr. Towerham had nothing to say—and the widow only : “ I wonder has Isabella seen him ? poor man, how horrid !”

Isabella was, at that moment, weeping over

Mrs. Arnold's letter ; she did not join the party again for the remainder of the day, and, by way of commenting upon Cicely's unwise communication—" how shocked she was to hear of Mr. Temple's being drowned ! and my sister Arnold hopes the Portuguese will be hanged for the murder,"—the politic lady added : " They were old acquaintance, Mr. Towerham—almost relations, I may say;—Mr. Temple's mother was a Levison."

PART VIII.

THE CHANCES OF THE SEA.

As no one in his senses, who has accompanied my tale thus far, will believe that Walter Temple perished in the waters, it is useless to prolong what does not amount to suspense, and to keep the reader from the party in whose adventures he is most interested. Walter did not perish ; though the darkness of night and the swift sailing of the Carribbee made any attempt to rescue him, on the part of those on board her, utterly unavailing—and they concluded, therefore, that he was lost for ever. The hero of a story has always some advantage—some *only just*

sufficient to save him;—and a floating spar, which some providential chance flung into Temple's arms, after he had been supporting himself in the water for the best part of an hour, afforded him so much assistance, that he was able to weather through the night. O the length of that night ! short and summer though it was—and the dreariness of that “ broad lonely sunrise ” over the world of waters ! I have described him as one of a bold and self-sustained spirit. He had need of it now, to enable him to meet the prospect of a fearful death. As for his thoughts, they were beyond his controul ;—remembrances of the past, visions of the future, all merged in the mere animal desire of preserving life ; and when the peril was past, he answered all enquiries as to his sensations during those long hours, by declaring that though he seemed to live a life, in the course of that period, so much of confusion, amounting almost to delirium, mingled with its fearful realities, that he could no more convey by words any adequate idea of his sufferings than a waking man is

able to disentangle and reconcile the various events which fill the least coherent of dreams.

He was saved, however, after he had been eighteen hours in the water; he was picked up by a boat sent for that purpose by a ship, one of whose crew had descried something floating helplessly on the waters—upon a closer scrutiny had discovered that *something* to be a man.

The first sounds which greeted Temple's ears, when, after a stupor of some hours' duration, he was restored once more to consciousness, were anything but encouraging. He tried to make use of his eyes—they were closely blindfolded—of his hands, to remove the bandage—they were confined by a wiry sash or cord, and his arms were pinioned. But the sound of feet, stamping above his head, acquainted him at once that he was not on deck. His clothes were gone, and he was wrapped in some ambiguous garment, and laid at length (he felt as if *laid out*) in a berth, the noisomeness of whose odours it is not in the power of decent language to describe. The

sentences which he gathered were spoken in a sort of *Lingua Franca*,—a mixture of bad Portuguese, French and the Negro jargon. He had become familiar with it during his residence in Jamaica, enough to comprehend as much of its meaning as was conveyed in the following conversation,—and he began to think, as he listened, that it would have been better for him had he fallen a prey to the sea, than into the hands of false brethren.

“ What shall we do with this fellow, now we have got him ? ”

“ Knock him on the head at once ! ”

“ Give him a dose, and overboard with him,” said another voice.

“ What !—and poison the poor fish ?—stick a knife through him say I ! ”

“ Starve him !—a proper punishment for coming among us with such empty pockets. Something we must do, to keep our hands in practice.”

“ We had as well have let him drown then,” said a fifth speaker—O how Walter blessed him for his mercy ! “ He’s a strong-limbed fellow—suppose we let him take his choice ? ”

“ I don’t admire these chance recruits,—there’s no depending upon them.”

“ We have never had one who knew how to respect an oath. San Josè ! don’t you remember how that little Frenchman served us, your countryman, Hilaire ?”

“ No protégé of mine.—It did him little good, he ! he ! he ! don’t you remember how he wriggled after Tomaso had stabbed him ?”

“ Pooh ! let him live if he likes—he will be all the better, and we shall be none the worse. It will be easy to take him off whenever we please.”

“ You need not trouble yourselves,” said the first speaker, approaching the berth where Walter lay, who was sensible of his hot and spirit-reeking breath ; “ he is dying ; he has not moved for the last three hours.”

“ He *shall* not die !” said the gentler voice, which had spoken only once before, and in language a shade less corrupt than the rest ; “ I claim my privilege.”

“ And wherefore now, comrade ?”

“ He is my countryman ; I have read the

papers in his pocket-book, and I have reasons for what I say. When we get nearer Kingston I can tell you more."

"And so we are to have the pleasure of keeping him and physicking him too, while we are cruising about. Leave him to me, and I will settle him with an Alpha-and-Omega of a dose! he! he! he!"

By this time, Walter's senses were fully awake, and his spirits with them. He had heard enough to convince him that he had fallen into the worst possible hands; but the training of his early manhood, during the time which he spent with Colonel Levison, had not been without its use in immuring him to danger and vicissitude,—and his terror, now that the danger was known, gave way to cool and vigorous watchfulness. He felt that his life hung, as it were, upon a thread, which might, at any moment, be severed by the caprice of others. Could he only take an observation of the speakers, he thought it would be easier to shape out some plan to be pursued. He first tried to slip his hands from the bonds which tied them—in vain—the knots had been fasten-

ed and double fastened by an expert sailor ;— next, by violently and suddenly raising his eye-brows, he endeavoured to push the scarlet handkerchief by which he was blinded, either up or down—(a certain dull light, streaming through its folds, acquainted him with its colour ;)—but this was also fruitless : lastly, he turned himself round in his narrow berth, with almost noiseless dexterity, that he might remove that which veiled his eyes by rubbing his forehead against the bundle (for pillow) beneath his head. The contact was odious ; but effected what he so much desired. When he had replaced himself in his former posture, a small crevice of clear light was revealed, between two twists of the handkerchief ; and the last effort of his strength, fast failing before a return of his fever,—brought on no doubt by the night he had passed in the water,—was to look eagerly and fearfully out, and behold what was passing around, or rather beneath him.

If his dread was, for one moment, renewed in all its first terrible intensity, he may be forgiven,—for surely never did human eye

look upon a group more horrible than the one which was seated round the cabin-table. Every one of the company might have passed for an inhabitant of the infernal regions. There were six in number, and the countenance of each one was hideous, as much from the fiendish depravity of its expression, as the deformity of features by which the most of them were distinguished. One had lost his right eye in an affray ;—one had been half blown up by some unforeseen explosion ; and half of his face was fearfully lacerated ;—a third, an enormous negro, was disfigured by a loathsome wen which doubled the swell of his throat at one side. But the only one whose features were sound and regular, was, to Walter's thinking, the most diabolical looking of the company, pale, thin, and cadaverous, with small restless, reddish cruel eyes, and a face utterly devoid of hair. He was one fitted to preside over, and enjoy the terrors of a chamber of torture :—his countenance had lost every trait of human feeling, and was more fearful, from this ghastly apathy, than the bloated and bestial visages of his comrades.

The other two were worthy to belong to such a fair company. Nor was their dress of the sea ;—it was too fine and too fanciful to be the costume of a hearty unsophisticated sailor. Each of them wore a sash or shawl about his waist. The negro's head was decorated with a splendid blue velvet cap, with a long peak, which hung down upon one shoulder. Their pistols and daggers were of the finest workmanship, with stock, and hilt, and scabbard, magnificently ornamented and inlaid. Two of them, instead of common shirts, wore garments of striped silk of gaudy colours, and the pale cruel looking man, ear-rings of massive gold. The cabin, as far as Temple was able to remark its appointments, corresponded with the costly style of their accoutrements. It was richly furnished, but filthy to the last degree of filthiness. The mahogany table had been hacked with knives,—the floor profusely stained with—it *might* be wine :—arms were hung in every corner, and on every projecting beam, and a strange hatchment-like device with scull and cross-bones painted upon a blood red field was suspended against one of

the bulk-heads. It was pricked in a thousand places with dagger wounds. There was no mistaking the nature of the ark which had sheltered him.

The hour must have been late, for the feasters, one by one dropped into berths, leaving the thin bloodless man alone in the cabin. Temple once or twice fancied that he saw his head turned towards the spot where he was laid, and he fancied that his hand was as often upon the dagger at his waist. There was caution as well as cruelty in every line of his face, and the young man's blood ran cold, at the bare thought of falling asleep, while such an one was waking. At last, however, he too seemed disposed to settle for the night, as, wrapping himself up in a long cloak of fine blue cloth, all stiff and stained with large dark spots, he threw himself upon a sort of couch, and was presently asleep.

All was now quiet :—it is during such pauses that the sense of peril, past, present, or to come, is felt in all its tremendous fullness ; and Temple may be excused, if his heart beat quicker than it had ever beaten before. He

could not but imagine the scenes of bloodshed and license which had been acted in that cabin ;—its very air had a slaughter-house scent qualified with the odour of the decaying fumes of spirits :—and the thought came over him, that, in case of the tenderest mercy being extended towards him, he might be left to lie there and be starved. It was now four and twenty hours since he had tasted any food, and the exposure to wind and wave, together with so long a fast, so wrought upon him, that in the course of half an hour, he relapsed into a state of stupor, haunted, to his last moment of consciousness, by a resolution not to sleep, lest that pale fiend-like looking man should awake, and strangle him while he was sleeping.

* * * * *

The broad blazing sun of the Tropics was setting in the fullness of his magical glory, when Temple, whose malady had kept him prostrate for many weeks, was permitted once more to breathe the fresh air, after he had again and again reiterated his frantic petition either to be killed at once, or allowed to come forth from

that horrible cabin. Why he had been suffered to live, and even nursed with some rude care, he could not guess, unless it were from the expectation, on the part of his captors, of his being able to pay handsomely for his freedom. Once or twice, indeed, Fancy had suggested to him that they might be sparing him for the deliberate luxury of torture, but reason rejected the supposition as being beyond even their villainy. There was more show of marine discipline on the deck than in the cabin. Every thing was scrupulously clean, and the crew looked like sailors. The principal officers, with whose faces and voices he had become familiar during his long confinement, were dressed in less fanciful attire than when he last beheld them. Altogether, to be once more under the cope of Heaven, and out of sight of the impurities of the den below, was an unspeakable relief. The one-eyed man, who had been Walter's chief attendant, had even arranged a pile of sails cushion-wise, and motioned him to occupy them. The presence of the invalid on deck seemed to create a sensation among the assembled groups, for, in the same horrible jargon he

had heard before, his conductor said, laying his hand upon the negro's shoulder :—" I told you, Victor, we should cure him."

" I hear an English tongue !" exclaimed Temple, yearning to break the long silence he had been compelled to maintain, (his attendants having utterly refused to answer any questions)—" Is there any one here who can speak to me in my own language ?"

" Go to him, Frank, and tell him what you have to say," said the negro, who seemed to be chief in command ; and the one-eyed man came immediately and seated himself beside Temple. The rest of the men were each of them lazily occupied, some playing at cards, squatted on the deck like savages :—some straining their eyes, by looking through their spy-glasses to see whether island or sail was arising to break the monotonous line of the horizon. Some were cleansing their pistols ;—the pale man (whose name was Hilaire) was sitting apart from the rest, intently plaiting a tight rope of very small thongs, and occasionally comparing it with the lash of an enormous whip which lay beside him.

The conversation between Walter and his neighbour began with a simple question, on the part of the latter :—

“ Are you better for the air ?”

“ Thank God, I live !—It is to you that I am indebted for being well nursed.”

The other bowed slightly,—and Walter became the catechist.

“ You are English, then ;—from what part of the kingdom ?”

“ No matter—if I am your countryman, is it not enough ?”

“ What is the name of your ship ?—whither is she bound ?”

“ You had better ask the Captain, over yonder, to inform you.”

“ What do you trade in ?”

The man said nothing, but put aside the sails, and pointed to a dark brown patch on the deck.

Some how or other, Walter augured not ill from his demeanour, which, though rude, appeared assumed, it might be for the purpose of concealing softer and better feelings than he chose to avow. He was resolved to follow up

the idea. "You are not fit for your trade," said he, "if you do not like to name it. How soon will you put me on shore? I can pay handsomely for my passage, when I reach Kingston."

"You will be expected so to do, if you ever get there," was the reply.

"I gathered from your talk in the cabin that you are bound for Kingston. Honestly now, I am on board a free-trader, and in your power :—when will you put me ashore,—and at what price ?"

His frankness seemed to make his way, for the other replied, "It is well that no one else on board can understand how free-spoken you are. You must bridle your curiosity, or you will get into quarrels ;—and I having preserved your life, am answerable with my own for any mischief you bring among us."

"You have preserved my life :—I will show myself not ungrateful. Has it been in danger from aught besides fever ?"

"Look around you, and you have your answer. You had better know where you are, as soon as possible. One of two things

happens to every one who sleeps a night on board *La Fortuna*, either to join our band for better and worse, or to make his peace with his God, before he tries how low he can sink in the blue water. On the spot where you are sitting, I have seen two women stabbed,—in cold blood too : you have seen the traces of the murder. Look at Hilaire yonder, who is sitting so quietly in the sunset. He was the first to strike them, as he had been the first to ”——

“ And you talk of such hellish doings as matters of course ? ”

“ Must I warn you again, Mr. Temple, not to be so free-spoken, and to calculate how much your life is worth. What would you say if the usual alternative were proposed to you ? There is a vacancy in our number.”

“ How is it that you know my name ?—Is yonder pale line on the horizon, Jamaica ? ”

“ Why, you are more of a conjuror than I ! to guess the name of yonder stripe of cloud-land. I only read through the letters which I found in your pocket, and you may bless your God that I did so, for it has given you a chance

for your life. Don't speak so loud, or you may feel the weight of Hilaire's lash :—Christ ! I remember the first day, when the sight of streaming blood made me as sick as death !”

“ There is better nature in you than you choose or dare to avow. How was it that my letters saved my life ?”

“ Why, Mr. Temple,” replied the man, in a more English tone than he had yet used ;—“ I know a good deal about you. I lived many years at Levison Court !—If I were only there again, bad as it was !”

“ Merciful Providence !” exclaimed Walter, “ and to have fallen upon you in this way :—what a fate has been mine !”

“ You are the first of my countrymen who has fallen into my hands since I took to the roving life two years ago, and I was bound to do my best for you ;—but I warn you that that best is not much ; and when I looked into your letters, and saw the old names, and old places mentioned, I could hardly believe my eyes. My name is Waldron ;—I was long ago groom to Colonel Levison. Have you strength enough to listen to a long story ?”

“Tell me!—I am impatient to hear. Am I then to be haunted by that fiend and his doings all the rest of my days?”

“Well then, use your ears well, as this may be the only opportunity we may have of speaking together;—my comrades are very suspicious. You are now partner with Arnold, the rich merchant of ——. You had courage enough to break loose from *his* snares. I must tell my tale to some one before I die!”

Walter, full of wonder, with a mute gesture of his head invited the other to proceed,—and could hardly believe that he was a living man, and awake, and thousands of miles from home, as he listened to the following remarkable, and to him intensely exciting narrative.

“I have no time to waste in talking, and need not ask you whether you know Dale Parish. But do you remember a blacksmith’s shop—an ash tree grows over it, just before you come to the finger post, where the Levison Court road turns off?”

“Enough—I know it well.”

“I was born there, thirty years ago—you would not think that I was no older—on the

same day with a sister. I was to be brought up to my father's trade ;—she was to go out to service. But I was always of a haughty masterful temper—the most mischievous and boldest of all the boys on the country side ;—and then I was never properly seen after. I hated the heat and the clatter of the forge, as soon as I could speak,—and declared that I would go to sea. My father would not hear of it ;—twice I ran away, and twice I was brought back, and beaten within an inch of my life. My mother was dead, and my sister, by ill luck, put to service with Mrs. Levison, who took a fancy to her as soon as she was born, and would have her called after herself.”

“ The Colonel's mother ? ”

“ The same, Sir. If there was ever any one who had the wickedness of others to answer for, it was that woman—you know that as well as I. Well, it seems the Colonel heard that I had a spice of the devil in my composition ;—he liked to have such about him—and he sent for me, and flattered me up to take service with him, and it was a fine

thing for a wild vagabond young fellow to have horses to gallop the country over, and plenty to drink—and—but you know all about that, too, and how he expected every one under him to serve him body and soul. I had not been with him five years, when he began to take a fancy to my sister, who was as pretty a girl as you would wish to see. She was not the only one, by many, whom the Colonel ruined. The old lady was fully as bad—for she upheld him in all his wicked ways, and would see and hear and believe nothing, while the neighbourhood was ringing with his doings. My sister was 'ruined,—and he used her like the brute that he was. One day he gave her such a blow on the breast, as she will carry the mark of to her grave. At last she was so worn out, that she was contented to marry that gallows-bird Vial—a pretty marriage it was! But, before they managed it among them, bad as I was, when it came out about Florence, I could not abide any longer in the Colonel's service, for all he paid me such high wages; and, besides, I wanted to see foreign parts,—so nothing would serve me but I must quit him and go to

sea. To sea I went ;—what was there to keep me on shore ? my father, hard as he was, was dead—my sister ruined for life ! I entered as a common sailor on board the *Jane*, West Indiaman—and the seven years I passed there were the roughest and happiest of my life, and something like the most respectable, though nothing to boast of. During this time, my sister and Vial were settled in ———. Vial had quarrelled with his master, and taken to driving hackney coaches—and when I came home, it was some comfort to find her with a house over her head. Poor Florence ! I wonder where she is now ?”

“ I got on so well in the seafaring line—for I liked the life—that when the mate of the *Jane* died, I took his place under Captain Durham—as good a man, that was, as ever lived, and as good a sailor as ever left port. When I returned from the first voyage I took as mate, as proud as could be, and went to my sister’s house, I found her in great trouble ; her husband had run away from her—the truth was, that he had been lured back by Colonel Levison, who dared not lose sight of one

who was so deep in his secrets. I was heartily glad to find the fellow gone—for him and me never could agree, and he was always bringing up old times, and talking how the Colonel durst not break with him after all. He had been away several months and never written to Florence, nor sent her a penny. But the night before we sailed, he came back again,—a curse upon him ! it has made a devil of me ! and I was so near being a respectable man !” He gnashed his teeth with agony as he spoke, and paused—Walter took breath, and, after a moment’s respite, the other went on more minutely.

“ It’s just like yesterday, the night of his coming back. My sister and I were sitting together over the fire—it was Christmas time, three years ago. I had her two lads upon my knee, and was somehow or other sorrier than usual to leave her. She had made shift to keep herself by washing and sewing, and I was leaving her all the money I could spare—for if she had come to want, I could not answer for what she might do. We were just then talking of Colonel Levison’s sudden death—

she had even said : ‘ I suppose I shall have my husband back again,’ when a knock came to the door ;—I got up and opened it, and there stood Vial !

“ Poor silly creature ! what a noise she made about him, and how glad she was to see him, as if he had been the best husband in the world, instead of using her like a brute, as he did. He was decently dressed in mourning, and began fairly enough by asking pardon of her, and putting a couple of guineas into her hand. He knew how to flatter her round—for he kissed her, and was so fond as never was. But I knew, by his eye, that he was not a bit in earnest,—and he winked at me as if he had something to say she was not to hear ; and he persuaded her to go to bed, as she was to be up betimes in the morning to give me my breakfast. As soon as she was gone, he ran across the street to a dram shop, and brought in a bottle of brandy, and said we would have a comfortable glass of grog together, and talk of old times. I knew that the fellow wanted something particular of me, by his cunning look. If I had got up, and gone out of the house, all

would have been well. No sooner was she fairly in bed, and the house all quiet, than he turned upon me and suddenly said :

“ ‘ Waldron, my good fellow, I will make your fortune, if you will help me to get a friend of mine over the water ; you are going to sail to-morrow, arn’t you ? ’ said he.

“ ‘ I am,’ said I, ‘ but you know I can’t do nothing without the Captain’s consent.’

“ ‘ Devil take you and your Captain both ! ’ said he, ‘ you are the same fearless Frank Waldron that you used to be, I suppose, and will ask no questions, and pocket the money. If you should find out who he is, when you are out at sea, you will not blazon it out.’ He counted out a hundred pounds upon the table, all in bank notes. ‘ Here, will this argument be of any use ? ’

“ I own I always loved money ; but I could not make up my mind at once. ‘ What is your friend’s name ? ’ said I, ‘ I will have no half secrets ! ’

“ ‘ You shall find out for yourself, and keep it when you have found it. Come, a bargain—or not ? Take a last look at the

money, if you cannot say and *swear* Yes, before I count *five*.'

" Fool that I was ! the money got the better of me, and once I was resolved—I determined to know no more than I could help. Our plan was soon made up ;—we were to set off before day-break, the next morning. Vial was to come with us in the boat, and pull it back, and the run-away lie down in the bottom of it, till we could get him on board,—and then he was to be stowed away in the hold till we were out at sea. I was to face it out with the Captain as well as I could, and, if need, was to bribe him—for Vial said his friend had plenty of money about him.

" I could not sleep a wink that night, as you may guess, and was up and upon the pier a quarter of an hour before the time. There was no one to be seen, and I was just beginning to hope they would not come, when I heard something close alongside of me,—and there was Vial and his friend wrapped up from top to toe, in a long dark cloak.

" The Jane had dropped down to the Rock with the afternoon's tide—so that we had to

row out to her. We made free with a boat which Vial was to get back somehow or other ; and by ill luck it was a keen starlight night—so that we managed to steer tolerably straight for the ship. No sooner had we fairly pushed off, than Vial's friend rose up in the boat, and laying his hand upon my shoulder, said :

“ ‘ Are not you afraid to start on a voyage in company with a dead man ?’

“ I leaped up, as if I had been shot. God above us ! it was that wicked Colonel Levison ! I would rather have put to sea with the Devil himself on board !”

“ It was ?”

“ You shall hear. How they laughed at my fright ! and the Colonel made a fine joke of it ! how he had not been really dead, but only in a sort of trance, they call it—and Vial and he had managed the cheat as cleverly as never was—that Vial was up to any roguery—and how they had got up another body, and smuggled it into the coffin ;—and how the Colonel had disguised himself—none knew better than he how to masquerade it ; and how it was safest to be near the fire when the chimney

smoked—and he had fairly himself driven the hearse down to Levison Court. He was a mad fellow ! the crazier the thing the better he liked it.”

“ Do you mean to tell me,” said Walter whose agitation was too great to permit his fully understanding the man’s words at once, “ that you took out Colonel Levison—the wicked Colonel—to the Jane ?”

“ Have you not heard me ? I was all in a flutter, as you may suppose ; but I had sworn an oath I durst not break, and there was nothing for it but to go through with the business. We got him on board finely—for the man who was on deck was more than half asleep, and almost all the crew and the Captain had gone ashore for the last night. I hid him in the hold among some empty barrels, and gave him a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine. I thought the night would never be gone !

“ It did go, however ; and the Captain came on board, and we weighed anchor, and were off with as fair a wind as ever blew. All that day and the next I felt I don’t know how. I was never more wretched in my life,—half

hoping, half fearing that it would be found out, and not daring to say a word to any body. He lay snug, however—I wonder how he bore it so long—till the evening of the second day, when land was out of sight. I was just considering how I should break the matter to the Captain, when, lo, and behold ! he was beforehand with me. I was standing alone, when he comes sharp up upon me :

“ ‘ Frank Waldron,’ says he, ‘ who is this that you have hid among the barrels ?’

“ I knew him well—and that it was of no use to tell a lie ;—so I just told him that it was a friend of mine, who was in a little trouble, and wanted to slip quietly out to Barbadoes.

“ ‘ We’ll, have him out,’ said the Captain, pleasantly, ‘ and take a look at him. I don’t admire such doings on board the Jane ; but, if he be a friend of yours, Waldron, I suppose we must say as little about it as we can help. Hollo, there ! you in the hold ! come up, and let us see what you are like !’

“ I heard a lumbering sound below, and, a minute after, some one coming slowly up the

companion ladder. The Captain ran forward eagerly :

“ ‘ By all that’s holy !’ cried he, staggering back, as pale as a sheet, ‘ do you know what you have done ? This is no friend of yours, Waldron, this is—I would rather have the Devil himself on board, a thousand times rather !—this is that fellow Levison ! I know him for all his wig and roquelaure. If you have done this knowingly, you are mistaken. I would not sail a knot further with such a freight. We will put back at once. Stand back, fellow !—you are not fit to touch an honest sailor, let alone a gentleman ! Hollo ! Swainson, is there never a pair of irons on board ! I take you prisoner, Sir, in his Majesty’s name,’ and he clapped his hand on the Colonel’s shoulder.”

“ Then Captain Durham recognized the passenger at once ?” enquired Temple, as soon as his lips, parched with the intensity of his interest, could mutter the words.

“ To be sure ; they had been acquainted long ago—and Captain Templeton was another of the set ; and Durham’s brother was a

justice of the peace, and had issued warrants against the Colonel. Folks were beginning to find him out.—But that's neither here nor there. When he found out that there was no hiding himself:—

“ ‘ Captain Durham,’ says he, with his hand in his bosom, ‘ I have five hundred pounds here—a thousand—they shall be yours if—’

“ ‘ To the devil with you and your money !’ cried Durham, whose blood was fairly up. He sprung upon the Colonel, and caught him by the collar of the threadbare coat he had put on to disguise himself in. It ripped in his hand as if it had been so much paper.

“ ‘ To the devil with *you* !’ cried Levison, drawing a pistol suddenly, and flinging the Captain off him—for he was the stronger of the two. He cocked it,—and shot Durham through the head—the poor fellow fell like a log, and it was all over with him !

“ Bad as I had been, this was more than I could stand ; so I ran forward ;—the rest of the fellows—the cowards !—were staring

this way and that, as if they did not know who else's turn it was to come next. But he drew out another pistol, and pointed it at me. His finger was on the trigger.

“ ‘ Another step, and you are a dead man ! Speak to those blockheads, *Captain Waldron* ! and try what a handful of gold a-piece will do towards shutting their mouths.’ ”

“ I don't know how it was,—but he was never so gallant, never looked so like a gentleman, as when he had just done one of his black jobs, as he used to call them. The men were terrified by his determination, and some of them won over by the sight of the gold. For my part, I felt as if the sea was giving way under us, and going to swallow us up :—and there lay my poor Captain's body, fast growing cold. But he knew how to manage every body ;—and he drew me aside a bit, and cajoled, and bribed, and threatened, till I did not know upon whose legs I was standing ; and, before morning, he had brought us all round, save about a dozen of the crew, and then he started off in the long boat, with a keg of biscuits and a barrel of water ; and

he bade them be sure and remember his face, that they might keep the barrels for him, till he met with them again.

“ Well, to make a long story short, we were to set up as free traders. We ran right for Savannah at once, to pick up our crew. The Colonel kept a sharp eye upon the Englishmen, and it was wonderful how they dropped off;—some were lodged in a house where they caught the yellow fever. I am the only one left alive,—it seems as if I could not die! But, look at Hilaire yonder,—how he watches us! my life upon it, there’s something in it! He was the first who joined;—the Colonel had a particular knack in hunting such out. I could lay down a dead man for every day of the month that he had a hand in despatching. He has a positive thirst for blood, and has been at me again and again about you.—Would you believe it? he never lies down to sleep without his rosary somewhere about him.”

“ But the Colonel, Waldron,—what became of him? Surely, Waldron, *he is not on board?*”

“ He!—I would hang myself first!” replied

the other, with an unfeigned look of horror. “No, he got us into the scrape at Savannah, as I told you, and when he had taken his first cruise with us, and lined his pockets pretty well, left us to shift for ourselves. We were all glad to be rid of him; he had not a snuff of the sailor about him. He went ashore at Demerara, and we heard,—we dared not seek after him much, and did’nt care,—he had died of the fever. But believe it, who will, *I* don’t. There is more work for him to do yet before he dies !”

“And you have followed this wild life ever since ?”

“I have had no choice,—and as long as we only—but I am going to let you into none of our secrets. Look, Hilaire has done ! and we must make haste and finish too. I will tell you, however, on what terms you have been let to live :—each one of our crew has the right, once in five years, to save the life of one of his countrymen, provided he can get him to join us, or make him do us some service. Now we have had bad luck lately, and our guns are—deuce take me !—Hector, yonder

negro, has laid a plan for a land robbery. I must be quick:—there is a rich English widow, none other than Mrs. Levison. You have been at her house;—it is somewhere on the shore—you are expected ”—

But at that moment, the Frenchman drew close to the speaker. Waldron rose, and began to pace the deck, singing aloud,—and every now and then glancing his eye towards Walter, to see how his communication was working. He then addressed a few words to Hilaire, and drew him off toward another part of the vessel, leaving Temple in a condition neither to move nor speak. His story had been so miraculously strange in its coincidence with Walter's history, no less than as a tale of adventure,—and its conclusion as respected Colonel Levison's death, so utterly unsatisfactory, that it was not to be forgotten by the listener, who felt as if he was to be followed by a spell all his life; and that the spirit of that wicked man, (or his real presence) was to be permitted to re-appear upon the earth again and again, like one of the demons in a goblin tale, who haunt the earth at stated periods, for their iniquitous

purposes. And his speculations upon this point were so engrossing as entirely, for the moment, to divert his thoughts from the present peril of his situation.

Presently, however, the full consciousness of the predicament, in which he stood, came back upon him with appalling force. Waldron's last words implied a price to be paid for his life, against which every feeling revolted. It was hard, so young as he was, to have to decide between death and degradation ; and though it would be an insult to his uprightness to say that his mind wavered for an instant, he retired to his berth that night in a state of miserable perplexity. In the morning he was worse again, and unable to rise from it ; he was now sedulously watched—the crew obviously began to suspect him. *La Fortuna* was rapidly nearing Kingston, when, towards the close of the day, the breeze which had been bearing her thither, with a fleet of other homeward-bound vessels not far behind, died suddenly away, and a dead calm ensued with all its distressing consequences ; the land was now distinctly visible, and, by the aid of

powerful telescopes, people walking thereon were to be discerned.

Walter's illness was not counterfeited. The anxiety awakened by Waldron's story was preying upon his mind, and increasing the low fever which had not yet left him. Never was man born with a more iron constitution than his, or he must have sunk under so many relapses. He thought that the day would never go over, though he could not wish it to pass more quickly, when every hour brought the crisis of his fate so much nearer:—and between weariness and suspense, he was almost ready to pray for death as his only possible deliverer from a situation, the danger of which appeared so hopelessly menacing. Evening came on;—the cabin was occupied by the usual party, who rarely were to be found sober within an hour after one of their voracious repasts. Walter's sense of hearing was sharpened by fever, and every word of blasphemous ribaldry which they uttered seemed to eat into his ears.

“I say, Waldron, we will wait no longer!—either we will have this fellow among us, or he

shall walk the plank ;—we will know to-morrow. But I see no use to give him the liberty of choice. He's one of your righteous youths, depend upon it!—who will prefer a hammock and a stone, to the delights of wine, women, and a free trade."

" You be ——, Hilaire !" replied Waldron roughly. " He was brought up in the same school with me ;—there's not a bolder heart nor a stronger arm on board ;—hand over the brandy."

Their conversation went on in much the same strain, and was followed by a carouse even deeper than usual. Ere long all were asleep—even the lynx-eyed Hilaire, who had hitherto seemed past the power of the strongest potations, yielded ;—and, closing his eyes, fell back stupidly in his chair. At that moment, a slight, a very slight sound was wafted in through the sky-light. Trifling as it was, it reached an ear whose natural sense was wonderfully acute : —it was the plash of oars. Never until then had Temple known the intensity, the agony of prayer. O that it might be no delusion !—no fancy born of vain expectation !—It was re-

peated,—and louder—and the drunken men slept on. It was impossible to calculate how near it might be ;—presently, however, a voice through a speaking trumpet hailed those on board the *Fortuna*. Walter could lie still no longer,—the chance was a desperate one,—but it was for life. To get clear of the cabin, he must pass over the negro, and another, whose huge bodies, half slidden from their chairs, were lying in the relaxed attitudes of brutal slumber. With a desperate effort, for his frame was quivering with fever, he sprung up—he descended cautiously—two steps and a half were successfully accomplished, and he stood among the prostrate bodies—he manned himself for the last and longest. The boat must be alongside, for the sound had ceased, and some one was heard saying in an English voice, “Is Captain Vanderkemp on board the *Rotterdam*?” (*La Fortuna* having assumed the discreet semblance and name of a Dutch West Indiaman.)

Another effort, and he was at the door, issuing forth.—No—a sudden thought struck him, and he absolutely mustered courage to step back, and seize a sword, which hung

beside the grisly hatchment already mentioned. He touched pale Hilaire with his foot, who grinned and gibbered, and half started up ;—but the deed was done,—the weapon was in the hand that well knew how to wield it, and so much of the peril overcome. With a last tremendous exertion of his fast-failing powers, he swung to the heavy iron plated cabin door—locked it. In another minute he was upon deck,—and the enormous bunch of keys plashed down, many a fathom deep, in the ocean.

His prayer *had* been heard—for, by blessed good fortune he made his way to the gangway alongside which the boat had run—it was the work of a moment.—“Put back! put back!” shouted he, in his loudest voice, springing as he spoke upon the head of a man, who was ascending, and who was thrown down with himself—“Put back!—row for your lives!—this is a pirate!”

All this was reiterated, ere the crew, like their officers, half intoxicated, and stupified by so sudden an exhibition of energy on the part of a dying man, could think, or so much as lay a hand upon him. In another instant they

were clustering like bees upon the gangway ladder,—an instant too late !

Walter seized a handspike, and pushed off ; and almost ere the crew of the boat, amongst whom he had alighted like a vision, could ask a question, or point to their fleet—O sight of joy !—lying between the rover and the land, now visibly near—they were a fathom's length on their way towards safety. Those they left behind found enough to do in understanding what had happened, and in contriving the release of their imprisoned officers,—whose rage was proved, by the dead body of Waldron, stabbed in a dozen places, being washed up on the sands of a lonely quay, a few days after this blessed and almost miraculous escape,—so that their chase was presently abandoned ; and the goodly merchantmen who received their late prisoner were too formidable in force to be attacked so near the shore. In the night the breeze sprung up again, and by day-break, *La Fortuna* was left far behind them—for ever !

PART IX.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE last escape has been described as hurriedly as it happened, and as confusedly as it was remembered. So sudden was it,—so un hoped for,—so providentially permitted,—so complete and rapturous was the change from the loathsome cabin of the Rover, and her hideous crew, to the order and neatness of the merchantman,—and so profound the exhaustion which succeeded efforts of strength so disproportioned to the powers of a frame already weakened by illness, that it is not to be wondered if time brought to the convalescent no

clearer idea of his peril, than is represented in in the sketch I have attempted. When he *did* look back, however, his gratitude and wonder at his own safety (to which the confusion of the moment, and the disabled state of the pirate's guns had mainly contributed,) amounted almost to positive pain, and with this mingled a feeling of sincere and poignant concern, when the fate of Waldron was made known to him by Surgeon Huntley's description of the body, which he had been called upon to examine.—He felt that the life of a fellow-creature had paid the ransom of his own,—and that he was bound to show that that ransom had not been paid in vain, and to exert the energies restored to him, well and worthily.

We must leave him, revelling in the full possession of this liberty—alas ! purchased by blood ;—to look upon the thralldom of another, upon whom misfortunes fell with a double weight, inasmuch as they were not met by any strength of mind. This was Castro, who, as may have been gathered, had been charged with Walter's murder by Vial, and imprisoned as soon as ever he set foot on British ground,

—a doleful welcome in a strange land ! There was no want of facts to corroborate the testimony of the serving-man—such as the obvious antipathy which the prisoner had always showed towards Temple,—and his having been perceived gliding about the deck, a few moments before the sound of the plash in the water, which awakened the attention of the steersman, was heard ;—and Vial's evidence that he had seen the deed done, was brief, precise, and not to be shaken by any cross examination.

And yet, some how or other, it often happens, that popular sympathy gives to the criminal what it deducts from his accuser, and that pity for the severity of his punishment at once extinguishes the sense of the enormity of his offence. There were some to whom the tale was told, who ascribed Castro's enmity towards Temple, to the natural indignation of one of haughty spirit, against the man who has basely deceived him. Walter was accused first of having jilted the lady himself, and then of interfering to prevent her marrying another. These pitied the irritable and moody Portuguese, upon whom the loneliness and suspense

of captivity preyed so heavily,—were resigned to the loss of one, whose prosperity was making so many prophecies of none effect,—and vented a full measure of displeasure upon the informer. Many of Vial's old wild exploits were raked up to prove that he had been, if he was not now, a most profligate character,—totally unworthy of credence :—“ A man, who had left his own wife in a dying state, and offered to marry a rich Creole, while she was yet alive—” (Rumour always makes the most of offences)—“ was he to swear away the life of a gentleman and a stranger ?—Why then, nobody would be safe.”

This was the opinion adopted by Mrs. Lesage, who, for some caprice's sake, which would appear inexplicable to those who have never studied “ the little ways of men,”—bestowed upon the prisoner as much good sympathy and regard, as she had formerly lavished upon Temple. Him she began to denounce as a regular adventurer, — “ she wished that she could believe him to be crazy : —(as she had been formerly told, on the best possible authority,) for after he had paid such

devoted attention to that weak coquettish Mrs. Levison, (and how any man could was a wonder !)—then to put obstacles in the way of her marriage with another, might have been explained away upon that supposition, but was inexcusable now.”—She was the more inclined to pass such a severe judgment, because she was aware that Isabella, in her own private mind, took the part of the absent one;—and she had not attained that perfection in the art of manœuvring, at which point agreement, rather than contradiction, is employed to convince and to persuade. “It was her temper. She must speak out,—and she never spoke from prejudice!—She thought much worse of Mr. Temple than she used to do,” and wound up every discourse on the subject with a sigh, and a “Poor Castro!”

She even went to the length of imagining that Isabella’s peremptory and final rejection of Mr. Towerham’s attentions when they amounted to addresses, was occasioned by some secret reservation of herself and fortune—but for a dead man?—No matter; the last half of her fancy could not drive the first

moiety from its ground : and, to crown her bad humour, Isabella, having remained at Bath to witness the celebration of Cicely Royston's wedding, declared herself satiated with its pleasures, and returned to our town, as she had left it, a single woman. Her little lively friend had made her own a dashing Captain of the Guards, with a splendid figure, a well filled purse, and a *Sir* at the head of his name ; and Mrs. Lesage was often in doubt whether it was the greater trial to hear the deliberate Mrs. Arnold descant upon the happiness of her sister, Lady George Raylton, or her pompous Lord and master regret his invaluable partner and friend, " poor young Temple !" in words of many syllables, but no real feeling.

Isabella had promised to meet the bride and bridegroom at Dale Hall, when they returned from their wedding journey, and was only waiting for their summons to shake the dust of the town from her feet, and to refresh her spirits with the sights and scents of the country, now teeming with the profuse beauty of summer,—when the quietness of her heart

was suddenly, and somewhat rudely disturbed ; —but we will be more circumstantial.

Doctor Goodrich was, one very hot day, wending his way homeward, so fagged by a long round of visits which he had been paying on foot, that he wondered as he went whether it was in the power of any surprise to quicken his pace, or to arouse him to further exertion of mind or body,—when some one suddenly ran against him, and, ere he could lift up his head to see who it was, overwhelmed him with a torrent of apologies. It was Mr. Arnold.

“ Very sorry, Doctor,” said he, as soon as he had recovered his breath, “ extraordinarily concerned at my own rudeness ; but I have been so amazingly surprised to-day ; I am hardly myself ; my nerves have received so severe a shock—(Doctor Goodrich smiled mentally at the burlesque of the idea of the merchant’s nerves)—my friend and partner, poor Temple !”

“ Ah, poor fellow !” said the other, saddened by the mention of his name, whom he mourned so sincerely, “ it was but this time last year, that we were riding together along

shore,—and he speaking so happily and hopefully of the future,—alas !”

“ He is alive, Sir !” cried the other, who found it necessary to raise his voice, to obtain a hearing ; “ did you ever hear of such a thing ?—a drowned man !—and alive after all !”

The Doctor was indeed amazed, when his first incredulity could be overcome ;—smarting eyes, aching limbs, burning pavement,—all were forgotten, and, in the fullness of his joyful wonder, he whirled away his cane to the opposite side of the street—a gambol totally foreign to his usual discretion.

“ Alive !—when ?—where ?—why ?—how ?—You don’t say so ! Alive after all ! God bless me, but this is extraordinary and delightful ! Alive ! tell me all about it !

“ We know very little, Doctor—nearly as much in the dark as yourself. It is a most amazing case of preservation,—so far as they were from land, too !—and I should not have believed it, had I not warrant for it in his own hand-writing. See here,—dated—

Kingston, June 1st. 17—

“ Dear Arnold,

“ I am only this hour arrived in Kingston, very ill, and hardly able to write ; but as I am on the point of sailing for England, in the Racehorse, and send this by the Harbinger, which has the advantage of a tide or two,—I will keep all particulars till we meet. Should she arrive before us, you will not think that a ghost is stalking into your office when I make my appearance there. I write this on my knee, in the greatest possible haste—and married to Mrs. Levison, who accompanies me to England. See Castro immediately, and tell him I am distressed at the thought that he has been put to restraint on my account. The fault was in my own drowsiness. God bless you. W. T.

“ I hope you are satisfied with the result of my voyage.”

“ And married to Mrs. Levison ! that is the greatest wonder of all,” said the Doctor, “ for, in spite of what every body said, I

could not help fancying that he had cooled in his attention towards her before they sailed,—and suspecting what he suspects—it cannot be !”

“ Ah, Doctor ! why *will* you always be wiser than your neighbours ? You never would believe one when I told you that I knew it would be, and thought this Castro little better than an impostor.”

“ Why indeed—let me look again : yes—it is *married to*—and there is no counterfeiting his bad queer hand-writing. Well, he can afford to do one thing ill ;—but are there no further particulars to be had from anybody ?”

“ I can hear none—you know as much as I do now—but I expect the Racehorse every tide, and then we shall hear every thing.”

“ I am sorry for Castro, though ;—does he know it yet ?”

“ Know it ! I made all possible haste to tell him—for, though I don’t like the fellow, I was sorry for him in prison. If it had not been for that old Catholic priest, I think he would have died. But, Lord bless me, Doctor, you never saw a man in such an awful passion !

He flung his arms about and swore, and I thought would either knock me down, or knock his head against the wall. We shall have to bind him over to keep the peace."

"Poor fellow! I cannot wonder at his being discomposed. If such a thing had happened to me, when I was going to be married to my wife—but cannot you come in and tell Mrs. Goodrich herself? she will be prodigiously delighted. Temple was always a prime favourite of hers."

"I thank you; no, Sir," replied Mr. Arnold, resuming his pomposity, "you may suppose that this extraordinary intelligence makes us very busy, especially after the arrangements I have made,—and I have wasted too much time already—so much is doing on 'Change;—but I could not resist the temptation of stopping to tell you. I will send you a line by one of the boys, as soon as ever the Racehorse is heard of—" and away marched the monied man, brimful of his own importance, and his partner's cleverness, and his partner's wife's fortune of a hundred thousand pounds. No fear of the stability of Arnold and Co. now!

So soon as they had shaken hands and parted, Doctor Goodrich rung his bell as it had never been rung since that memorable night of November with which my story commences,—strode over the shrimp of a footboy, and rushed into the parlour, where his wife was sitting at work upon the peaceful pastime of her entire married life—an enormous patch-work quilt,—with such an impetuosity, that even she, unobservant as she was, could not but be aware that something unusual must have happened—for she raised up her head, and stared at him with a remarkably disturbed and curious, “ Dear me, Doctor ! ”

“ Do you know, my dear,—you will be delighted to hear that our friend Temple is not drowned after all, and is coming home in the Racehorse as fast as he can come :—a married man too. Ha ! Miss Lesage ! I beg you ten thousand pardons, I did not see you before, I was so full of my news. I dare say you have not forgotten Mrs. Levison yet, with her long ringlets.”

Excellent Mrs. Goodrich was completely roused and astounded by the tidings ; she

arose,—and, forgetting the footstool which supported her feet, stood up a head taller than usual; the needle-work dropped from her hands, and was abandoned to the gamesomeness of a kitten, who was no respecter of hexagons. At last she ejaculated :

“ Well to be sure !—dear me, Doctor !—and who is to marry that Mr. Castor ? ”

Isabella’s amazement was yet greater, and mingled with a feeling which closed her lips as with a clasp of iron. She was an unworthy heroine, for she neither fainted nor revealed her secret by any sudden outcry, nor even (it is said) turned *much* paler than usual, as she thought within herself : “ Married to Mrs. Levison !—can it be ? and after Mr. Le Beaumont’s letter ? ”

By this time, the party was increased by the addition of her aunt, who was full of the news which she had gathered after some original fashion of her own ; she came in, in the midst of a full flow of her own comments and exclamations.

“ Never heard anything so remarkable in all my days ! never !—not drowned after all !—when

they saw him!—O it's a trick! I'll not believe it! There seems no possibility of killing people now-a-days;—so much the better for those who are living!—And married to that Mrs. Levison!—it is positively shocking! just what I expected, however; *I* could see through his quarrel with Castro! *I* told you Isabella, love, what would be the end of it! Pity that some others could not see with my eyes a little earlier. Did you ever hear of such a thing, Mrs. Goodrich? isn't it positively marvellous?"

"And dear me, Mrs. Lesage! who is to marry that Mr. Castor?"

"Castro—Ma'am—Castro. I have told you a thousand times Castor is oil. Why, he has a right to complain, with a vengeance! and, if he don't *do* something as well as *say*, my name is not Lesage! They were engaged—engaged, to my certain knowledge, before they left England—I mean Temple and the lady. Well, Mr. Temple turns his back upon her,—no one can tell why—and to show her spirit—To think of what it has all come to!—and this poor fellow shut up for these two

months. O it's shameful! and I hope he *will* call Mr. Temple to account, as soon as ever he comes on shore!"

Mrs. Lesage's ideas of the extent of the misery which Castro was sure to feel, were not so wide of the truth as the majority of her speculations. That passionate young man, whose naturally violent nature had been exasperated by the sudden blight which had fallen upon his hopes—the listless inactivity consequent on confinement, anxiety as to its result, and having to defend himself according to the laws of a strange country, in which everything appeared to him unjust—had burst into such a paroxysm of rage, upon the news being tenderly communicated to him by Mr. Arnold, that the merchant, being unused to make allowance for the fiery temperament of the South, imagined, and not without cause, that his reason was in danger. At one moment, he wept such profuse tears as no agony can extort from the eyes of an Englishman;—then he reiterated again and again his vows of vengeance. The lock of Sybil's hair, which he had worn close to his heart, he cast to the

winds ;—he dashed her unoffending picture into a thousand pieces. Never was liberty so ungraciously received, or so little valued. He cared not whither he went, or what became of him ; and his demeanour was so fierce, and his aspect so unlike that of sanity, that those who passed him in the street, stared and shrunk back,—and the keeper of the hotel, to which he repaired upon his liberation, called a council of the entire household, to deliberate upon the propriety of a dark room, and a strait waistcoat.

So passed over a day and night, without bringing much abatement of the storm. He would hardly taste any food, and drove those who intruded upon him hither and thither with such violence, that when, towards noon, a person sought admittance, neither master nor man was willing to disturb “the strange gentleman,” and the visitor was compelled, himself, and alone, to interrupt Castro’s stern and gloomy reverie.

He was sitting with his back to the light, his elbows leaned upon a table, and his head covered with a perfect mat of thick black curly

hair, supported upon his clenched hands. His dress had not been changed for the last many hours ; his figure had grown frightfully thin during his imprisonment,—and when he lifted up his face, to pour a volley of oaths against the intruder, it was so sallow, and sharp, and wild, that even Vial, trebly hardened as he was, was, for a moment, shocked, and stood still.

His own guise, too, had undergone a complete metamorphosis. Since he had reached England, he had squandered all his money, which did not amount to much, as he was one of unthrifty as well as profligate habits, who spent as fast as he gained ; and, popular odium, always strong against an informer, was, in his case, increased by certain stories to his discredit, which began to transpire. In short, by his debauched and intemperate habits he had rendered himself unfit for any hard labour, and no one would give him any lighter employment. He had been seen wandering about the town, each week a little shabbier than he had been in the foregoing one,—and, by this time, had parted with his last appearance of respectability, and stood

before the Portuguese, in his true colours—a vulgar and cunning reprobate.

“ What !” thundered Castro, springing up, as soon as he became aware of his guest’s identity, and throwing his chair to the furthest end of the room ; “ is it possible that you have the effrontery to appear in *my* presence ? Get out, this instant, villain that you are !—out !—or you shall make your way through the window !” and he approached Vial with the full intention of putting his threat into execution.

“ Come, Mr. Castro, said the man, without showing the least fear, “ you are very angry with me, and, I grant, with cause ; but I have a rich amends to make you, and *will*, (speaking rapidly, lest his communication should be interrupted)—the Racehorse is outside.”

“ You and your news go to —— !” cried Castro, furiously, seizing him by the collar.

“ Stop, Sir, one moment, or you will repent to the end of your days !—Stop, Sir, and hear me ! I can offer you such a revenge as no one else can—such a revenge as shall pre-

vent Mr. Temple ever showing his face in England again. I know all—let me go—and I will tell you everything.”

“Revenge!” muttered Castro between his teeth, relaxing his grasp so suddenly, that Vial reeled after the chair. “Be quick, fellow! I will not be fooled with idle words!—speak out at once!”

“Colonel Levison is *alive*, Sir!” said the man, in a piercing whisper.

“And is this your wonderful revenge? Pooh! do you mean to bring up that bugbear again, after having done your best to swear away my life? Begone, this instant! or I cannot answer for my hands keeping clear even of such a wretch as you are!”

But the other would be heard; and, by coolly persisting in his purpose, gained his point. His tale, however, was so constantly interrupted by Castro’s exclamations, that, for clearness’ sake, it will be the best to attempt to give only the substance.

It was with an unabashed front that Vial laid open to the Portuguese the scheme of villainy on which he had been acting so long.

It seemed that he had been the instrument of Colonel Levison's abominable purposes, so long as the latter had anything to give,—and gave an account of his supposed death and escape, up to the moment when the Jane had weighed anchor, which, when afterwards compared with Waldron's, as told to Walter Temple, corresponded with it in every point. Within twelve months from that time, his master and accomplice had reappeared under a disguise so complete, that his most intimate friends never once appeared to suspect the reality of his assumed character; this was aided, too, by his never remaining long in one place at a time. He had bound his servant to execute a deadly revenge upon Temple; it was hoped by both that the latter would have married Mrs. Levison previous to her leaving England, in which case, the fact of her husband being alive would have been revealed to them, and its concealment treated for; though Vial confessed that neither of them would have dared to make it publicly known, as the Colonel would, in such a case, have undoubtedly been transported, if not his life forfeit-

ed, for some of the manifold offences in which he had taken part. The servant-man confessed also, with the utmost deliberation, that, as his old master, if he were yet alive, was no longer able to purchase his secrecy, he was willing to transfer his services to Castro,—still for the purpose of being revenged upon Temple, for whom he had conceived an unquenchable hatred.

“Go on!” exclaimed Castro, when the tale was almost complete, “and so you purpose to associate me with yourself in your revenge, and your notable plans of extorting money?”

Unawed by the bitter tone in which the sarcasm was uttered, Vial, possibly mistaking his auditor’s quietness for assent, went on to say how that his accusation of Castro had been only to blind the eyes of others,—and that he should most certainly have absconded before the trial came on. Castro heard him to an end.—

“And is this all?” exclaimed he, while his eyes flashed fire, “is this *only* all? and you wish to engage me as a coadjutor in this pre-

cious scheme of yours ?—and you imagine me idiot enough not to be able to discern truth from falsehood—and that I am so blind as not to see that the revenge is, and has been aimed not only at Mr. Temple, but at another—whom, in spite of her monstrous perjury— and you allow me an honourable participation in the mysteries of your trade, for the moderate compensation you have mentioned !—and I am to live upon the scrapings which I can extort from their terrors ! You are a *little* wrong for once, it seems. Do you imagine that I—a gentleman, could *condescend* to be polluted by your fellowship, by breathing the same air with you, and consulting, and plotting, and chuckling together, as we counted our gains ? I will try the truth of your story. If you will bring your news to market, it shall be in public ; you shall repeat what you have said on board the Racehorse ! and before a magistrate ! Come along, Sir ! and if you utter a word, I will shoot you through the head ! You shall find what it is to have *dared* thus to insult a gentleman !”

Sir,” said the landlord, who had over-

heard, from afar, the noise of this vociferous harangue, and had now opened the door, and peeped in to see what was a-doing, "I must trouble you to be a little quieter, or—"

"I will attend to you directly!" cried the infuriated Portuguese, who had grasped Vial's arm with a force from which that wretched man was unable to break, and was dragging him towards the door.

"What is to be done here!" cried a voice from another head, peeping over the shoulders of the Boniface, of the Star and Garter. Vial began to roar lustily for help, and the crowd thickened. The house-maid descended, broom in hand, from the upper region of cobwebs and lumber; and the cook, who had been cleaning a spit, followed the sounds up stairs, brandishing her weapon as she came.

"Did one ever see such a wild creature?" cried one.

"Let him go—you black Spaniard, you!" vociferated Boots, who was a sturdy John Bull, "or you shall go up before the mayor!"

"He is killing me," bellowed Vial, "help! help!"

They rushed into the room. "Stand off, my good friends!" shouted Castro, whose English always failed him when in a passion, "I want no mischief of any of you!—but this vermin—this—" (he gave the prostrate man a sound kick) "has insulted a gentleman, and I will make him prove his words. Come along, Sir! you will find who it is you have provoked!"

"Help! help! my good countrymen!—will you stand by, and see a murder committed?"

"Nay—that we will not," cried the Boots, "let him go, and drop that pistol—you yellow neger, or I'll beat you into mummy," and suiting the action to the word, he grappled with Castro, with such success, (for he was much the stronger man of the two), that Vial disengaged himself, and fled out of the room amid the cries of, "away with you, be off now!—There has been noise enough in a decent house to last a twelvemonth."

"No. 2 is in a fit, she's so frightened at the row," observed another chambermaid, who had joined the group.

“Come now—*be* quiet!” cried the landlord, “or you shall be taken to the coal-hole!”

“Let me go! let me go!” repeated the other, struggling furiously with his detainer, and at last breaking loose from his gripe, and dashing through the phalanx of servants of both sexes, assembled at the top of the stairs. They were glad to get rid of him. The landlord hated to have anything to do with “justice business.” But, if his intention was to pursue Vial, it was vain. For that worthy had made good use of his heels and his superior knowledge of the intricacies of our town, and was now no where to be seen; nor, as will be readily believed, did he re-appear, again to urge temptations which had been so ill received.

It was with the following morning's tide, that the Racehorse entered our beautiful river, bearing on board her the two whose coming was expected with such lively interest. Temple and his companion were standing on deck, inspecting the launching of a boat which was to convey them on shore, when, from a

distance, another was seen advancing as rapidly as four oars could propel it against the tide. Both watched its coming eagerly,—they were certain that it must contain some one in quest of them. But the lady's was the keener eye of the two, and before Walter could discern the form or features of the solitary man it conveyed, she had exclaimed—“Santa Maria! 'tis Paul Castro!” and had fallen, half senseless, into his arms.

* * * * *

I leave the interview between the lady and her lover to be imagined by all who have followed me thus far, and become familiar with his unrestrained passions, and deep and (to do him justice) unselfish affection, and with her yielding and passive nature, always at the mercy of the last new comer—yet so sweet, in spite of its instability and self-engrossedness, as to disarm anger. How the two wept (for we have seen that his was emotion, which did not disdain to vent itself in tears,) and how—I must leave to be imagined; and come on shore with the Merchant by Chance, thus happily restored to his own country.

Few were the friends to welcome him ; but those few greeted him with all their hearts. Doctor Goodrich and Mr. Arnold, each gave him a hand, as he stepped from the boat, and sundry of his old office mates, whose hearts had been mellowed by the report of his untimely death, till they had ceased to regard his exaltation with envy, were not far behind—each with a kind word, and a honest smile. But the inward elateness of his feelings cannot yet be fully understood, as in answer to “ is all well ? ” he received the gratifying assurance, that his schemes for the restoration of the concern had been one and all successful, and that there was every prospect that its latter well doing, would exceed even its former money-makings in the good old times.

“ And then,” continued Arnold, waxing jocose, as he dilated upon what remained to be done, as well as what had been already achieved—“ with the assistance of your wife’s fortune—don’t blush—my dear fellow ! though I am glad to see any colour upon your cheek again, after all that you have gone through. And where is she ? I am impatient to offer my

congratulations. How was it that she did not come on shore with you?"

"Wife!" echoed Temple, as if he had not understood Mr. Arnold's last words, "you are anticipating matters strangely—how do you know that my wife will have a fortune?"

"Will have!—come, Temple, that is a good joke!—*has!*—I expect that you and Mrs. Temple—but what could possess you to leave her on board?"

"Her—on board?" repeated the other, his features crimsoning suddenly, "here is some mistake. It was but this moment that I had Castro with me, roaring like a lion. I judged it best to leave him and the lady to settle matters as well as they could; and now you—what do you all mean by this?"

"Is it not written in your own hand?" cried Arnold anxiously, "do you mean to tell me that you have been making a joke of us all?"

"Written—impossible! though that letter or rather scrawl, was written in such a hurry, in the midst of my preparations for departure, that I hardly knew what I was about!"

"Nay—I have it about me, thanks to my

good old habit of never destroying a written document; I can convict you from the work of your own pen. Here—do you not see—*married to Mrs. Levison?*”

Walter gave one look at the letter, and laughed loud and long. Never had he been seen in such high spirits, never so nearly happy and at peace. “What a blunder you have made, thanks to my illegible handwriting!—but I see that I have written *worried to*, instead of *by*. Poor lady, she was in a dreadfully irritable state; and was constantly tormenting herself with fear, lest she should arrive in England too late!—If I had any thoughts of marriage in my head, they were—but come away to the office—I have much to hear and to ask.”

This almost boyish cheerfulness on the part of one so reserved, if not melancholy, as Temple had been, could not but surprise every one who had known him. It must have arisen from his possessing some inward cause of joy, with which no stranger could intermeddle. He seemed delighted with himself and every one else, and even met Mrs. Lesage’s acid

face, with a cordial smile. She was exasperated beyond measure at the contradiction which her prophecies, as well as her wishes, were doomed to encounter, and never could satisfy herself with abusing Mr. Arnold's stupidity, and Temple's villainous calligraphy. "If he had been in love," she said, "there would have been some excuse." In short, nothing satisfied her.

Nevertheless that same villainous calligraphy, by giving occasion to a false report, produced consequences most important to two of the personages of my tale—these personages being Mrs. Levison and Castro;—whose good understanding had been restored by five plain words on the part of Sybil, who overflowed with rational gratitude towards Walter (but nothing more)—for the delicate and respectful care he had taken of her, on her home voyage. It had elicited from Vial not only the distinct fact that Colonel Levison was yet alive; but the place where he might be found, and the name which he bore. It seemed as if this miscreant had played his last card in attempting to entangle Castro in his toils, and that he

had lost every thing, was evident from his sudden and unaccountable disappearance. There was nothing now to prevent Temple and Castro from coming to a complete good understanding, and co-operating in the steps which were to be taken without delay. The former, indeed, showed so much disinterested anxiety and activity, that the nature of the Portuguese must have become as ungenerous as it was proud, if he had retained any longer either suspicion or resentment. In consequence of Vial's communication, the gentlemen set forth for Bath, within two days after Walter's arrival in England.

Their journey, though disagreeable in the extreme to Temple, who stood in need of rest, was by no means a hopeless one. It only remained for him to identify the tempter of his youth with Corby the gamester;—and then to institute proceedings in the courts of law, to liberate Mrs. Levison from his right-over her. They augured from Vial's communication, that he was no longer in correspondence with his master; and yet, lest he should repent of the mischief he had done by revealing Colonel Le-

vison's secret, and warn the latter to abscond, they judged it best to lose no time by the way, —and, in spite of the lack of expedition in travelling, as compared with the speed of these days, arrived at Bath early on the second evening after they left our town.

They resolved to lose no time in beginning their researches, and in truth, their enquiries were answered as soon as asked, Corby the gamester being nearly as well known as the Master of Ceremonies. Though he had not been seen in the streets lately, there was little difficulty in tracing him to his present abode. It seemed, that, from the ruined state in which we last saw that wretched man, he had to sink yet lower. He had been a notorious character, in Bath, for many years ; for among Colonel Levison's other freaks, it was a favourite pastime of his to sustain more than one character, and by the celerity and secrecy of his movements, to elude suspicion—and being a first-rate adept at play, he had been accustomed to repair to the city of waters for the purpose of replenishing his purse, as well as to indulge in the sport of masquerading. Many a for-

tune had been tithed by a few evenings' intercourse with Corby ;—many a facile young man, irretrievably ruined by his society, as fascinating as it was corrupt. But, since his stolen return from America, when he resolved for the future to lay his old self aside for ever—his luck had began to fail him, and with his characteristic recklessness he had never made any provision for its decline ; perhaps the enormous quantity of spirits which he drank impaired his powers of calculation ; or the constant and increasingly large sums which he was compelled to pay Vial, drained his funds, at times when ready money was of consequence ; sums, which like most ill-gotten gains, vanished as fast as they were received ; for Vial, in his way, had tastes and pursuits, and while his sons and his wife were receiving charity at the hands of Temple and Miss Lesage, he was secretly and madly squandering the money, the possession whereof he durst not own. It was extraordinary, however, that, in no moment of drunken indiscretion, did Colonel Levison ever approach the betrayal of his own secret, thus showing a degree of firm-

ness which many would scarcely deem compatible with eccentricity almost amounting to madness. He had sunk from one stage of debasement and squalidity to another, until some magistrate, out of sheer humanity, had ordered that he should be taken care of in a workhouse, seeing that the end of his life was at hand. To this refuge of the destitute were Temple and Castro directed, and they repaired thither, at an early hour, on the morning after their arrival in Bath.

One of those public establishments, where comfort is pared down to its minimum, never perhaps looks so uninviting as on some laughing sunshiny morning—the time, of all others, when the mind loves to receive images of beauty and freedom. As Walter crossed the wide gravelled court in the front of the building, unadorned by one single flower, and ascended its high, clean, desolate staircase,—it was not in his nature to avoid contrasting the past estate of the man triumphant in the luxury of wickedness, with the present wretchedness of the homeless pauper, who had hardly been permitted to crawl to his death-bed

under the shelter of that cheerless roof, because he belonged to another parish ! He could not but feel a certain compassion tempering his repugnance towards the wretched being he was about to visit, as the superintendent, who accompanied them, flung open the door of a small glaring room, without any screen to temper the ferocity of the sunlight, which streamed full upon the straw mattress, where, covered with a coarse rug, was laid the wreck of the gallant and godless Colonel Levison !

“ It’s of no use,” said the man, “ he knows nobody ; he has lain in this stupid state for many days, and never speaks but to call for drink. The chaplain can make nothing of him.”

One glance was sufficient for Walter’s individual satisfaction—for the dying man had no longer the power of maintaining his disguise. He was a most ghastly object. The peruke of long white hair, which had given Corby, the gamester, a certain venerable air, of infinite service to him when he had to deal with the trustful and inexperienced, had fallen

off,—and the entire of his forehead was revealed. His face was livid—its former purple tint having faded into a faint brick red, such as is peculiar to veteran spirit drinkers, and this last fast disappearing before the gathering hues of death ; but its expression was not to be mistaken by one, whose nightly misery it had been, for many years, to dream of that countenance under the influence of every possible passion, and in every possible position.

“ You may believe what I tell you,” observed their conductor, rudely, ; “ he would not know his own child if he stood beside him.”

“ I must try—though not *quite* so near a relation,” replied Walter, with a strong effort, forcing himself to approach the pallet of the dying man. “ Witness what I do.”—He then stooped his head, and said, in a distinct and impressive tone :—“ Colonel Levison, do you know me ?”

The effect of his words was electric. The patient, who had lain motionless for many days, leaped madly up in the bed, with as unlife-like a movement, as that of a corpse

excited to unnatural animation by the spell of the galvanizer,—and raising his long, bare, lean arms—(Walter bade Castro note the left hand)—cried out wildly, in a voice whose tones were assuredly not of earth :

“ Know you ?—I ?—Who calls me by my name to torment me ?—I am in Hell already !”

He fell back as suddenly and convulsively as he had sprung up, and never stirred nor spoke again !—

* * * * *

And now, who is there that wishes a circumstantial conclusion to the foregoing tale, wherein are comprised the Adventures of the Merchant by Chance ?—for to call certain love passages by that name, were to do them wrong—the course thereof ran so insipidly smooth that to mention their termination were to affront any one in possession of the commonest prophetic power. Who would care to be told, in many words, of the fortune he amassed—of the house he builded ? It only remains then for me to transcribe the preamble of his last will and testament, and thereby to

answer a question which may have occurred to some,—Who was Temple? The document commenced with these words :

For the satisfaction of my CHILDREN, (the word had been subsequently replaced by heirs at law) and for the encouragement of all those who may seek to do right for its own sake, I, Walter Temple, being of sound mind and in good health, in this year of our Lord 180—, do, previous to entering upon the disposition of my property, state the following facts.

I am the son of that John Stephens who was executed, in the year ———, for forging a Bank bill of £5000 upon ——— and ——— London Bankers. I was brought up among no good examples, and, at my father's death, fell into the hands of one whose active wickedness, I hope, is a rare thing upon Earth. But a circumstance which brought me near to Death's door, gave me time and cause for reflection : and I resolved, from that moment, to lead an active and virtuous life. My resolution has been strictly fulfilled in the matter of

activity ; of the virtue I must render an account at another tribunal. I married an affectionate and prudent woman, who is now at rest. On my wedding day, I replaced the sum of money feloniously abstracted. I commit these things to writing, not from any idle vain glory in my own doings, or to cast any reproach upon those who are gone ; but that those who come after me may be reminded, that it is better to make a name than to inherit one, and that what man hath done, man may do.

THE STREETS, No. V.

NIGHT IN THE STREETS. SNOW.

One of my conditions of acquaintance with the Streets was, if I mistake not, that you were to walk by night as well as by day, in winter no less than in summer. To me, after the heat and noise of a crowded room, the freshness of the open air is an unspeakable relief, and its influence, together with that of exercise, most efficacious in restoring the mind to its wonted tone of composure. I have stood up for the existence of beauty in the bird's eye view of a town, by daylight. I claim for it greater praise in its details of the

Streets at night. The long lines of lamps, in their diminishing perspective, are most grateful to the eye ; and, seen by their flattering and partial light, the most deformed mass of brick and mortar acquires grandeur and stateliness. How glorious then is the effect, should our way chance to lead us past some fine specimen of architecture, and should there chance to shine a moon. I shall never forget the beautiful appearance of the Bank of Ireland, beheld under such favorable circumstances ;—the deep shadows cast by the projecting wings of the building ; the mellow twilight which mantled the sweep of its semi-circular colonades ; the mystery thrown over all that one would conceal, and the spirituality (forgive the word, if it soar a thought too high) and softness imparted to all the portions exposed to view. Yes,—merely as a sight for the eye, if the mind never allowed itself to speculate upon the weal or woe of the human beings who are folded within its walls,—the night view of a town is impressive—under some circumstances, it may be sublime.

Night in the Streets ! what a thousand whimsical and grotesque pictures of years gone by are conjured up by the mere writing of these words ! what days of school-boy mischief ! what audacious pranks, our delight in which was so vociferous as to endanger the concealment necessary to their prosperity ! what wars waged against watchmen of the *ancien régime* ! what annoyances directed against the houses of those suspected of being miserly and ill-tempered ! what escapades, what frolics long buried in oblivion are now remembered, till we grow as mirthful as, a while since, we were disposed to be poetical ; the prudence of our mature years is, for the moment, forgotten ; and we could rush out, as of old, and pursue our enemy snow-ball in hand, ready to fight or to fly as occasion should require. We could lend ourselves to the achievement of twisting off a certain obnoxious knocker, which we pass every day, and which glares upon us with frightful eyes and a grinning mouth, so savagely, that we are reminded of the student Anselmus' tormentor—the witch who sta-

tioned herself, in that form, before the Archivarius Lindhorst's door, to forbid his entrance, as told in one of Hoffmann's crazy tales, so inimitably translated by that talented and large-minded critic, Mr. Carlyle.

But to return. How striking is the appearance of a long line of streets on some snowy night, when the pavement is all clean, and the midway frozen so hard, that every flake lies where it falls. Of all the children of the elements, Snow is surely the most graceful—the most gentle—the most courtly. Wind—beats him in variety—he is up to any music, from a lullaby to a grand chorus! One night, he will moan like any delicate and tender hearted lover—on the next, he will roar as if he had an army at his back, and wanted only the least in the world more of provocation, to crush your house down to the ground, with one of his gigantic gusts—and, even in his better humours, when he is neither melancholy nor mad, the audacity of his conduct is proverbial: think of the ships that he has wrecked—the venerable fruit and forest trees which he has blown down—the corn he has

prostrated—the houses he has unroofed!—Rain—why, for rain there is not one simple good word to be said, save by discontented farmers; or on some very dusty day—and then, one *may* compound for a thunder shower, but nothing more, and that, half for the sake of the spectacle. Hail,—cleaner than rain, but shrewd and biting past endurance. Thunder and lightning, too startling for people of sensibility,—no one likes to be come over on a sudden, with a loud lumbering peal, and a fierce flash of fire, which, for aught you know, may carry away the use 'of eyes, ears and hands. Frost, is *so* cold and stern! the miser of the elements, who locks up every thing beautiful and given to motion with his key of adamant, and would fain starve you into the uncomfortable belief that flowers are dead for ever, and that brooks will run no more: albeit, it must be said of Frost, that, like other misers, he can sometimes do magnificent things, and treat you to such a raree show, as there is nothing else in nature to compare with—changing scrubby sere trees into enchanted pillars of diamonds, and making hedges of

dry sticks outvie the far famed grotto of Antiparos. Thaw, is quite too dirty for decent company, but Snow (by the way, his only failing is a propensity to appear at the same time with that most slovenly personage) Snow is a gentleman born ; his easy, exquisite descent shames the best executed flights of the peerless Taglioni herself, and then he is as quiet as he is elegant ; as pure, until the earth hath soiled him, as if he were a creature formed of the down dropped from angels' wings. How beautifully, in the space of one short hour, has he strewn the vista before us—canopying the houses as with a silver mantle, and spreading beneath our feet a carpet so delicate, that it almost goes against our consciences to tread upon it. No wonder that West Indian born children are so delighted with his first appearance ;—no wonder that they love to find the print of animals' feet under their window when they rise in the morning, or to trace across the whitened fields the foot-marks of the woodman or shepherd—as we do those of the solitary pedestrian before us.

We have overtaken this tall figure of a man,

heavily cloaked, with a fur cupola upon his head, and above that, an ample umbrella—a man, be sure, from Kamschatka, to judge from the sooty superfluity of his whiskers and hair. Would that he were in Kamschatka, or any where save in our good town! He is one of those suspicious characters, whose occupation is at night, the last relic of the days of gentle highwaymen. You may at once recognize him and his comrades, should you meet them in the day-time, by their coarse blue surtouts and pantaloons, their black stocks, with no linen above, and an equal quantity below, their spurred boots, their huge ungloved hands, and a nameless strut, as different from the genuine military step, as a magpie's is from a bantam's. They have, all four of them, taken up their abode in the house of a respectable widow woman, whom they have inspired with so much awe, that she would give half a year's rent to get them out of her house, though she dare not hint such a thing, for as much as her plate is worth. They lounge about all day, and drink, and play at cards, and sleep, and all night are astir,

and often come in to change their dresses, and then go out again. But they pay their bills every week, and are very civil to Mrs. White-smith, so that she does not know what to do. That worthy looked at us, as we passed, and had we been alone, might have offered us his company, as it is—Hark!—a whistle!—he is joined by one of his comrades—they turn down that narrow street, and are out of sight in a moment. We may walk homeward unmolested, and as we go, remember a thousand strange stories of town robberies;—amongst others, of the incorporated body of thieves, who, some years ago, took a house in one of our principal streets, and were wont to set forth on their nightly expeditions in a hackney coach: and how they stopped an excellent Quaker lady, travelling peacefully homeward in her carriage: lifted her from it,—relieved her of her purse, watch and reticule,—saluted her, handed her into her chaise again,—bade her good night, and the coachman to drive on,—how...but perhaps the rogues may at some future period be honoured with a chapter (I had well nigh written a *gallows*) to themselves.

It was “on such a night as this,” that that great calamity befel an elderly virgin of my acquaintance, to allude to which, was tantamount to losing her friendship. Poor Miss Matilda Vere! she was one of those excellent ladies of the old school, of whom so few are to be found in our large, bustling, modernised towns: one who loved early hours, and shot sarcenets with tight sleeves, and rejoiced in scanty black lace cloaks,—one who took pleasure in playing a pool,—was greatly afraid of wheeled carriages,—went to morning prayers on week days,—wrought pictures in tent stitch,—kept two dogs and a parrot dumb from extreme old age,—whose reading was of the days of Mount Henneth and the Castle of Har-dayne, (that the glory of such books should *ever* go by!)—who objected to Miss Porter’s novels because they were too dry and historical,—and who died of the introduction of French wines and quadrilles:—in short, as cross, charitable, conversible, and hospitable an old lady, as you could wish to find residing in a retired square, opposite to a church, in a house up a great flight of steps,

with cherubim cut in stone over the door, and chintz window curtains which had been in use, ever since the rebellion of forty-five.

On such a night as this, in the days when coaches were few and cars not any, she was wending her way homewards, preceded by her "little maid some four feet high," bearing a lantern. The good lady was ruminating, as she walked along, upon her losses at cards, or on some choice piece of news,—“she never talked scandal, not she!”—which she had heard that evening; and the Abigail, with her garments kilted up high, trudged on, holding the light warily, and never looking round, till she had reached their own home. She ran up the high steps, gave a discreet knock, and then turned—Miss Vere was not there! For a moment she stood aghast,—such a figure as Hood would have loved to sketch!—She was positive, that they had set out together from Miss Dropwood’s;—then she began to consider that her mistress, seeing how bad the night was, must have become afraid, and returned to sleep at her friend’s house—she had done so once before: and contented (we confess, somewhat

easily) with this solution of her perplexities, she made fast doors and windows and went to bed. Alas ! for poor Miss Matilda Vere ! she was at that moment standing alone and amazed, in a coal vault into which she had slipped ! The lid thereof had been imperfectly fastened, and had given way beneath her heavy tread (she was one of the most ponderous of spinsters). Great was her surprise—great her discomfiture—loud her calls for help—but the watchman, who was subject to the ear-ache, was plodding along on the opposite side of the street, with his head comfortably wrapped in a Welsh wig, and few passengers were likely to be abroad on such a bad night. Then she began to tease herself with fears lest the same disaster should befall a second pedestrian, “and you know,” remarked she, “no one knows what disagreeable people might have come upon one’s head.” Then she began to wonder if Kitty discovering her loss, would come and seek for her ; until at last, amid her perplexities, and perhaps under the influence of the stirrup cup of mulled elder-flower wine of which she had partaken, she fairly fell asleep,

in a standing posture. How she awoke, by whom or when she was extricated from her inglorious confinement, were matters upon which she would never condescend—no, not to the friend of her bosom: and those who knew her valued her regard too highly, to risk the loss of it by their rash inquisitiveness.

How delightful is such a still white Christmas night as this, supposing the snow be all fallen, and the sky bright with its countless stars! There *were* such things as carols once; and it was a pleasant thing to watch the bands of little children creeping from door to door, with their ancient ditties, and their voices innocent and tuneless. There *were* such things as evergreen bushes wherewith houses were decked; and it brought a cheerful anticipation of the morrow's gaiety to overtake on Christmas eve, some hale man, bending under a holly bough, enriched with artificial flowers. Formerly too, (but the custom has been discontinued for many years) the quires of some of our churches paraded some of our principal streets, stopping occasionally and singing hymns and rejoicing anthems suited to the

season. I have lain betwixt sleep and waking, and listened to the harmony of their voices, till I have been ready to dream over the old scene of the Nativity as it is set forth in some monkish painting, with the Virgin and the wise men of the East, and the herald star shining upon, and receiving fresh glory from the manger where the holy babe was cradled. O let no one say that the ideal world is closed to the dwellers in a town, let no one excuse his own worldliness and wilfulness, by unjustly alleging that there is nothing in the city which can compensate for the absence of natural objects, for the lack of repose which belongs to rural life. From the most familiar and common-place things of every day life, the contemplation may set forth and wander along a thousand different paths of beauty, and forget the world of care and money as completely as if he sate musing in an elm tree instead of an attic, and hearing the whistle of wood birds, instead of the church clocks chiming the midnight hour.

THE STORY OF MADAME FABBRONI.

“ I could perceive, though Hannah bore full well
The ills of life, that few with her would dwell,
But pass away, like shadows o’er the plain
From flying clouds, and leave it fair again.”

Tales of the Hall. Crabbe.

Those who love a concert will understand the pleasure with which some years ago, on emerging from my invalid’s room, I encountered this tempting announcement, ostentatiously paraded on every wall, in the midst of the usual mosaic of advertisements of cheap shops, sales by auction, etc. etc.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHARITIES.

MUSIC HALL.

UNPRECEDENTED ATTRACTION,

MADAME FABBRONI'S LAST APPEARANCE

IN PUBLIC.

Madame Fabbroni, with the fame of whose talents as an artist the musical circles had long been ringing, "whose performance," it was distinctly stated in several newspapers, "a certain illustrious personage, whose taste in music was as fine as it was fastidious, had decidedly preferred to that of any other *Cantatrice* of the day;" Madame Fabbroni!—as famous for her unimpeachable conduct as for her superior beauty—with whose fascinations every caller had been tantalizing me, for the last fortnight, with "what a pity you are laid up! you never heard anything like her!" I do not know when I have been so much delighted, when my expectations have been raised to so high a point; and, certainly, I am sure that they were never more entirely fulfilled than on that Tuesday evening—an even-

ing to be marked with a white stone in the calender of my musical experiences.

The concert room was crowded to an excess, by an audience composed, as the chronicles of the day set forth, “ of the *élite* of the nobility and gentry of our town and its vicinity.” What a pretty show is a public room when completely filled with a gay good humoured company; what droll bouquets of characteristic heads does it present for the amusement of the physiognomist ! what infinitely varied studies of conceit, of confidence, of awkward bashfulness, of full-blown enthusiasm, of indifference assumed because it is *genteel* ! How different from a similar scene in the metropolis, and not the less entertaining for its want of style and the absence of aristocracy. There sate a group of girls, who had been laying by six-pences for the last three months to enjoy one treat altogether ; the eager brightness of their eyes, and the incessant flow of their sympathetic talk, being so many tokens that they were partaking of its delights, with a keenness of appetite only to be purchased by rare

acquaintance with pleasure. Close behind them was a belle, who had been with difficulty persuaded to show herself on this occasion, who could not enjoy a provincial spectacle, or any thing, indeed, after the Grand Opera at Paris! and pulled her bouquet to pieces for lack of better entertainment, *not* aware, of course, that every motion of her delicate hands was watched with avidity by a trio of gentlemen, who had avowedly taken up their position opposite to the end of the bench on which she was seated. Not far off, were two of the race of elderly musicals, who could avowedly remember the days when Mara and Banti made their first appearance, and while they would not allow that the art had been other than retrograding since the days of Handel, were, nevertheless, unable to keep at home whenever anything was to be heard. There was—but I forget myself—there came at last, after all my waiting, heralded by applause loud enough to raise the roof, and repeated again and again—there came at last the delight of every eye and ear in that large assembly—the far-famed Madame Fabbroni.

Dressed in a simple robe of black satin, and a small lace cap which clouded but did not conceal her rich hair;—she advanced to the front of the orchestra so quietly, with such an entire absence of pretension, that it was difficult to believe that this was the *artiste* so much flattered and courted by the great,—whose dress had served for a model to the fashionable, and whose acquaintance in private had been thought desirable by so many, “who made it a rule to have nothing to do with professional people.” She appeared to be scarcely thirty years old—so round was her cheek, and so smooth her complexion; but she confessed herself to be ten years older. This was pronounced by some, whose faces had outrun time, to be merely “a piece of affectation.” She had made the avowal, however, and none could question it. Her voice, too, was in full perfection—sweet and touching rather than powerful, and so clear that it seemed to penetrate every fibre of your frame with its silver sound. But the charm of Madame Fabbroni’s singing did not lie in her voice, it was in her expression, in the exquisite manner in which

she rendered her music, with such force and feeling as no heart could withstand. She was not one whose talent made you stare,—but you loved her for it—you longed to make a friend of her—your tears answered its call ; she could express inward fear, quiet pride, intense and passionate regret, with a truth and energy which I have never heard reached by any other singer. The music which, on that occasion, I heard her sing (I have often heard her in private since) was Zingarelli's "Ombra adorata," Handel's "Ye sacred Priests," a grand air by Pucitta or Guglielmi, or some other *ari* or *ino* of the *couleur de rose* school of composers,—the "Deh parlate," of Cimarosa, (a song for immortality,) and the duet, "Crudel perchè," from Mozart's Figaro, in which she so entirely *sung down* the poor little man who was *Il Conte* for that occasion, that he looked nearly ready to cry when an *en-core* was demanded, well knowing how small a portion of the applause fell to his share.

Whilst she sung, the hush of the audience, provincial and most unmusical as it was, was positively breathless—the applause deafening

when she ceased ;—then began the clatter of tongues, delighted to be set at liberty to express their owners' sentiments, in such snatches of talk as these :

“ O, Miss Johnson !”

“ Charming, Lydia ! charming, indeed ! look at Mr. Wilmot, yonder ! why, even *he* looks pleased, and you know he's generally too grand to admire anything.”

“ And Major Rock, too, Jane !—there, by the lady with the Paradise plume ; I am sure that he must have worn a hole in his gloves with his extacy. There's Mr. Brandram—don't move—I wont !”

“ Sister,” said the youngest of the economical coterie, in a loud whisper, “ does she make all the songs herself ?”

“ Hush, Anne ! you talk so loud ! people will find out that you have never been to a concert before.”

“ Well, ladies,” said an assumed, middle-aged, bilious-looking man, remarkably neatly dressed, who lounged up to another group, “ have you been pleased with *the* Fabbroni to-night ?”

“ O Mr. Exeter ! pleased ?—enchanted ! such a dear creature !”

“ Well, she *is* good, I must allow,” replied the would-be-critic, with an air of the most ineffable pomposity ; “ but I cannot forget Billington,—and then to compare her feeling with Grassini’s !”

“ Now, Mr. Exeter,” cried a lively girl, some fifteen years old, or thereabouts, who not having *come out*, was privileged to say whatever she pleased, “ you know you never admire anything or any body,—so, if you please, you shall say no more.”

“ Fie ! Jane, you are incorrigible ! But, tell me, Mr. Exeter, is it true about the gentleman who accompanies her !”

“ *What* true ?—I flatter myself that I am tolerably well acquainted with her history.”

“ Are they privately married, or not ?”

“ Why, really,” replied the oracle, “ it is a disputed point ; in town, I know, it was said——” but, at that instant, I extricated myself from the press, and lost the last words of the scandal-monger.

I was swept into the saloon with the crowd

of persons, eager, like myself, to obtain a near view of this celebrated syren. Her appearance suffered astonishingly little on a closer approach ; she was certainly one of the loveliest women I ever saw ; as she stood, the unconscious centre of an admiring circle, talking, with the most affectionate simplicity of manner, to an old gentleman with a white head, and occasionally appealing to the younger one, on whose arm she was leaning, and whom I at once guessed to be the person mentioned by the party in the room. But one glance at the pair made me laugh at the folly of supposing them to be married. I said to myself: “ This must be her brother;”—but I saw them exchange a look, and I hazarded a bolder conjecture : “ her son ?” though he looked as singularly old for his years, as she appeared youthful for hers. He was a plain likeness of Madame Fabbioni ; his hair was already beginning to turn grey, and his complexion was as pale and as dingy as undyed wool ; but he was still very like his mother. It was from his figure that I judged him to be younger than his face seemed to show ;—it

was tall, ill-knit and bending—the figure of who has outgrown his strength, I was standing, in a corner, noting, with much interest, the play of the lady's countenance, when a voice, close to my ear, said :

“ You did not know that she was a townswoman of yours ? ”

“ I !—bless me, Mr. Lee !—no, indeed, I did not ? ”

“ Yes, Sir,” replied the first speaker, “ do you not see that her name is Smith Italianized, with merely the terminal *ni* added. You must remember her husband, Oyster Smith as he used to be called.”

“ What, the fellow who failed ? ”

“ The same, Sir, and ran away some fifteen years ago, before I came to live here.”

“ I remember—and this is his daughter ? ”

“ His daughter ! pooh ! you are blind ! no, but that is his son, and that lady is his widow.”

“ Lord bless me ! you don't say so ?—is that pretty Harriet Robinson, as she used to be called ? Gad, I recollect her now—the sweetest pair of eyes she had, in all ——shire ! ”

“ A townswoman !” said I to myself, “ why then, I am sure that there must be a history worth knowing,” and, in the true spirit of curiosity which ought to animate every one who writes himself tale-teller, I set myself to work to discover whether there were any “ pitiful story” appertaining to this metamorphosis of a merchant’s wife into a first-rate concert singer. I need not recount all the ins and outs, the cross-questionings, and the gleanings of reminiscences, by which I obtained, at last, a complete knowledge of the principal facts of her life :—a writer of stories has master-keys which will open every lock. I have digested my materials, and thrown them into the form of the following sketch, to show “ how divine” a thing a woman may be made.

* * * *

It was a wet afternoon in the miserable month of November, and if, on the outside of a small lodging house, in one of our dingiest streets, every thing looked desolate and cheerless,—within the same, the aspect of things was still less inviting. The room in which my story begins, was a small parlour on the

ground floor, crowded with old-fashioned furniture—the chimney smoked, as was evident from the state of the ceiling, and the fire had been recently mended with a shovel-full of wet cinders:—the window had not been cleaned for many a long day—the soiled chintz window curtains, overdone with dusty fringe, were dropping to pieces from age and neglect,—and a large cupboard, containing the entire possessions of the family who had been compelled to take refuge in such a dismal abode, stood open, disclosing its heterogeneous contents. In the midst of all this discomfort, upon a settee, whose cover had been coarsely patched until it resembled Theseus' boat, sate a widow lady between her two daughters. The conversation had most probably turned upon the recent loss they had sustained, for many tears were shed;—the elder daughter was seen to weep profusely:—the younger, a beautiful girl, scarcely eighteen, seemed to strive with her sorrow—for again and again she buried her forehead in her two small clasped hands:—and, after a short pause, would break forth anew into a paroxysm of violent anguish, which was

redoubled, as often as she cast her eyes upon a letter which lay open upon the stained and ricketty table.

“ Indeed, indeed, Harriet,” said her mother, at last breaking silence, “ I cannot bear this. You will make yourself ill, if you indulge in such immoderate grief; and I only spoke, you know, my love!—I urged you to consult your own judgment. Come, dry your eyes—Susan shall answer this letter, and you shall hear no more of it.”

Harriet dried her eyes and looked up.

“ But, mother,” said Susanna, also ceasing to weep, “ what are you to do ?”

This was not to be answered. Mrs. Robinson’s body and mind had both of them suffered from a paralytic stroke, and the constant attendance of one of her daughters was imperatively necessary ;—and how was the other, an inexperienced girl, expensively, but uselessly educated, to provide the comforts which her enfeebled state required.—She began to weep like a child.

“ If Harriet,” resumed Susanna, “ had any other attachment—”

“No, no,” cried her sister vehemently,—
“Cruel ! unkind that you are !—It is not that, it is not indeed, mother !”

“If not then,” continued the other, “do you consider what you are doing in refusing even to think of this proposal ?”

“I know—I know it all, and any body but that man —— . To come upon us, with such an offer, at such a time as this, is it not enough, Susan ?—”

The mother turned wistfully from one daughter to the other, as they spoke alternately.

“Enough,” replied the elder, “to show that there is *one* at least on whom our altered circumstances have produced no change towards us.”

Harriet laughed bitterly. “And can you deceive yourself so far, as to imagine that this proposal of his, is the result of generosity ? No—no—shake your head as you will, you know better, as well as I ! He has asked me to become his wife, at this miserable juncture, because he fancies himself sure of his victim !”

“And his victim,” cried Mrs. Robinson,

“you shall not be ! Compose yourself, my love, you shall be pressed on this subject no more.”

Susanna arose from her seat, and making a show of controlling her impatience, walked to the window, with an air which was intended to convey severe displeasure against her sister's weakness.

“Susanna ! you shall answer Mr. Smith's letter. We cannot, in honour, defer it any longer.”

“O no !—no !” cried Harriet, kissing her mother, as she disengaged herself from her embrace, and stood upright before her. “I will not do what is so wrong !—You have seen my last grief, Susan ;—my last weakness—for I know it *is* a weakness ! How many a girl would be thankful to see the path of her duty so clearly pointed out to her !—I will follow it !—You shall hear no more complaint ; I hope that I have strength to do what is right.”

She made her way out of the room as she spoke, leaving her mother and sister in admiration at her sudden change of mood. She

hastened up stairs to her wretched little chamber, and falling upon her knees before a trunk, drew from its concealment behind the mouldering lining, a small picture. She did not allow herself one instant's time to peruse the lineaments of the face, which it had been her secret delight to pourtray from memory—and retouch—and return to again and again :—but, having torn the card on which it was drawn, into a hundred pieces, she opened the window, and watched them whirled away into the gloom, by the sobbing wind. It was over—the idol was destroyed ; she pressed her hands upon her heart, as if to keep down its beatings ; and prayed, with importunate energy, for support under the trials she was about voluntarily to enter into. Six weeks after that day, she married Mr. Smith, reputed at that time to be one of the richest men resident in our town, and without question one of the most ungainly.

The above scene may be taken as no bad specimen of Harriet Robinson's character. She was passionate, vivacious, imaginative, and yet able, in any emergency, to act with a degree of decision almost masculine ! Susanna

had wasted much blame upon her, for being “always in extremes.” In the hey-day of her deceased father’s prosperity, no one had ever enjoyed the luxuries of life with a keener relish than herself. Every mouth was full of her lively sayings ; every scandal-monger had borne bitter testimony to her gaiety. In short, she was loved and envied after the usual fashion of rich beauties. A circumstance, however, must be told, which had happened, scarcely a year before the downfall of her brilliant expectations, which gave a colour to much of her future life.

Harry Stukeley, the only son and heir of a Baronet in one of the southern counties—at that time, travelling upon the continent,—was as fine a young man, as old songs say, “as you would wish to see, all on a summer’s day,”—brave,—enterprizing,—and affectionate ;—and if somewhat fickle,—why, the best of us all have our faults. During a college vacation he had run down to our town to see its wonders, bringing letters of introduction to Mr. Robinson ;—and gave an early proof of his activity, by insisting upon riding a spirited blood horse

when he accompanied the ladies on some excursion or other—and of his ill-luck—by being thrown from the same, and breaking a limb. The consequences were, a long confinement in the merchant's house ;—but he protested, that a prison would be a paradise if he were waited upon there, by two such charming nurses as Harriet and Susanna. Alas ! the former, who was by much the most assiduous in administering to his comforts, appropriated the praise to herself more readily than a damsel a few years older would have thought prudent. He was young, elegant, well-born ;—she, a lovely, enthusiastic girl, whose thoughts and actions were regulated by the boldness of inexperienced innocence, and who was captivated by the fascinating stranger, almost before she knew that she had a heart to give away. They read together—they sung together ;—she found him, one day, busily engaged in sketching her as she was sitting with her embroidery frame before her. On the next she returned the compliment. Her mother was of that placid and unobservant nature which never sees any thing ;—her father, en-

grossed by the anxiety as to his involved affairs, which shortened his life,—and Susanna, was she blinded by similar fancies, that she saw nothing?—It might be so,—but ere Harry's convalescence was confirmed, there came from Sir Giffard Stukeley a polite acknowledgment of their kindness, — and a summons for his son to join him abroad with as little delay as possible. He was on the point of marrying a noble Italian lady, and wished his son to be present at the nuptials. It was a sore trouble to Harry to leave those affectionate girls: but he had scarcely set foot on the continent, ere some new fascinations of bright eyes and black hair, some air on the guitar, or some moon-lit ramble through a vineyard, eradicated the remembrance of both, for the time being. It was not so with those left behind;—Harriet thought it no shame to weep upon his shoulder when they parted, and busied herself in drawing a spirited likeness of the departed one, after the sketch she had taken. She never asked herself the question whether he loved her,—she was sure that she loved him, by the tokens of silence as to his

name, of dreaming of no one else,—of being irritated ten times a day at least, by Susanna's cool commendations of the merits of his mind as well as of his person, and the indiscreet enquiries of heartless callers, who never forgot to ask "whether Mr. Stukeley had yet written, and they so kind to him!"—Before her day-dreams were utterly dispelled by his long silence, after the one hasty note he addressed to *both* of them, just before he sailed for Ostend,—came the sudden and double calamity of loss of a parent, as well as of fortune:—and, at that precise juncture, an old acquaintance of Mr. Robinson's stepped forward, and offered protection and assistance after the fashion of Auld Robin Gray. She did, then, indeed wonder why Harry had ceased to write, but she checked so unprofitable a spirit of speculation, and as we have seen, consented to this odious match, to save her mother from the cares and privations of poverty.

But to marry a man who was her antipathy—Gentle lady, did you ever, for one instant, entertain a similar idea?—O then, and then only can you picture to yourself the sickness,

the soreness of heart, with which Harriet contemplated the sacrifice she was about to make; her personal dislike so little short of aversion, to the sound of his step, to his scraping dry voice, which she was compelled to master. He was fifty years of age, at least; a little lame, and wore a bag-wig—never was such a hideous bag-wig seen before!—Yet he had none of that quiescence in his composition, which is suitable to mature years;—he rocked upon his chair as he sate, he shuffled with his feet all the time he was talking—he told good stories without any discernible point in them, and was fond of the pleasures of the table enjoyed alone; for he was intolerant and suspicious of any society, especially of the young and the lively. His eyes were of a weak milky grey colour, his mouth opened and shut with a jerk, and when open, his under lip hung as if its main spring was broken. He wore full suits of a snuffy brown cloth (never of any other colour)—a hat, with perfectly straight brims—leggings—and shoes that creaked:—Poor Harriet, to be compelled to marry such an unlovely man, and she only seventeen!—

Then how every body talked the matter over ! some crying shame upon Mrs. Robinson, some saying that it was the girl's own fault, for that she had been offered the situation of teacher in Mrs. O'Dottrell's school—some went further,—but there was no end of their scandal ; she was married to Mr. Smith, and that was all that could be made of it.

There are minds which never move steadily, till some burden is laid upon them, the weight of which would grind a weaker vessel to dust. What if we say that there is a peculiar elasticity and energy of spirit, mercifully apportioned to those whose lot is cast on the rough ways of life ? — At all events, this was Harriet's case :—her temperament was of that gay and unapprehensive nature, which enables its possessor to cast off his cares as soon as their object is out of sight. This alone made tolerable the daily trial of her husband's peculiarities, which were unrelieved by any tenderness, or any of those transient fits of generosity, so touching in the uncouth—and when he was gone, she could forget his curiosity, and his continuous and sapless talk, and his particular

smile (that smile was the worst of all!) and amuse herself among her books, or with her music; or run two streets' length, and gather strength and spirit from the comfort of observing how contented her mother looked in the small house, wherein she was installed by Mr. Smith, according to the terms of the *bargain*. For occupation, she began sedulously to cultivate one of the most delicious voices which was ever bestowed upon mortal by the fairy of sweet song; though her husband saw "no good in it," and would fall to sleep in the midst of her sweetest air. He was an odd compound of a man: so keen a speculator in his counting-house, and so dull a companion at home—a man who lived upon his business reputation, and was proud of his wife, as others have been of a picture or a statue purchased at an immense price (he took good care that the world should know *how* dearly) to adorn his house withal—proud of her too, as of the mother to his heir,—for, within eighteen months after their marriage, she presented him with a son—their only child.

Here was another source of delight, merci-

fully opened to Harriet. Susanna and she had little in common. Her mother was rapidly declining, and ever since she was married, had shrunk from any confidential intercourse, as if afraid of hearing the particulars of the price, at which the comfort of her latter years had been purchased; her husband was never much more than civil to her; but her baby was surely sent from Heaven for her relief, that she might have some living creature all her own, upon whom she might pour out her whole heart's affections. Her recovery after her confinement was long and dubious, she was brought within a near view of the grave, and compelled perforce, seriously to weigh the comparative values of the world that is, and the world that is to come. She arose from her sick bed a wiser woman than she had lain down; but still merry as well as wise, and not a few scornful people would say—"I am ashamed of *that* Mrs. Smith! so giddy as she is!—and her husband hardly caring a straw for her!" Poor Harriet!—she little knew how hard a trial was in store for her!

On the first mild day after her medical at-

tendant had pronounced it to be safe for her to go abroad—she paid a visit to her mother who had been confined to the house by a slight cold, for a week. She found Mrs. Robinson alone, and was beginning artlessly to disburden her mind of the joy she felt in being released from her captivity,—and to talk, with a young mother's rapture, of her infant boy—when Mrs. Robinson, with some mystery, and a certain flutter of manner, put a letter into her hand and desired her to read it. Its contents ran thus :

“ Madam,

“ My absence on the continent, which has been much longer than I originally intended, has alone prevented me from sooner expressing my sympathy for your loss in the decease of my late lamented correspondent—particularly, as we are grieved to hear that he did not leave you in such easy circumstances as your merits deserve. I will, however, lose no further time in asking a favour of you, which may show how anxious I am that the intercourse between your family and mine should

be maintained on its former footing. My two little girls, by my first Lady Stukeley, have arrived at that age when they will need the good offices of an instructress. Will your daughter (permit me, by the way to offer you my best congratulations on the happy marriage of your *second* daughter—my son's great friend)—will your daughter, I say, oblige Lady Stukeley and myself by undertaking the charge of them?—My son, Harry Stukeley, who is, at present, travelling through Wales with a friend, will in the case of Miss Robinson's compliance with our request, offer her a safe and thoughtful escort to the scene of her duty, and I hope, her pleasure also. We shall receive her as one of the family—and I must beg to leave the adjustment of all pecuniary matters in your hands, and to remain, dear Madam,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ GIFFARD STUKELEY.”

“ Is it not a kind letter ?” said Mrs. Robinson, “ how pleasantly he mentions you !”

“ Kind? mother—I beg your pardon for

my absence—Susanna has answered it, of course.”

“ Yes—my love ! and I expect that Mr. Harry Stukeley and his friend will be here towards the close of the week. I shall be glad to see the young man again, though I do not know how I shall be able to prevail upon myself to part with Susan. Poor child ! how warm you look !—would you not like to have the window opened ? ”

“ Surely—mother,” faltered Harriet, mistrusting what she heard, “ Susanna cannot, for an instant, think—”

“ It is a great sacrifice, I know, love,—but you set her the example ! ”

Harriet could not bear this,—she turned to the window to shed unperceived the tears extorted from her by Mrs. Robinson’s talk. “ Sacrifice ! ” thought she within herself, “ does she think it a sacrifice to go and live under the same roof with —— It is a sacrifice, dear mother, which your circumstances no longer require,” added she with a sigh.

“ I told her so, my love,—but she seemed to think it right at once—and what could I

say?—and I shall have you still, you know, love; and that is every thing to me!” Poor Mrs. Robinson said, and *thought* the same of whichever of her daughters chanced to be her companion for the time being.

“ And so Susanna is actually going to Stukeley Priory? Happy, happy girl!—She might, however, have mentioned her plan to me, before she made up her mind.”

“ Why, Harriet, that is not being as kind as usual, and she going to leave us,—and for a governess’ place! I know what it is to be a governess. My friend Miss Lamb was one, and was expected always to sit at the side-table when there was company, and never to speak until she was spoken to.”

Mrs. Robinson’s reminiscence was lost upon Harriet, as she sate, with the letter in her hand,—her thoughts rapidly embracing present, past, and future chances. “ Here towards the end of the week!” said she to herself,—“ is there no escape?—No hope of avoiding seeing him?—but why should I? He will find no difficulty in meeting *me*—and after all, I almost

think that I should like to shake hands with him once again."

She took her leave, and went home to meditate upon the tidings which she had been told. The more she thought upon the matter, the more she was disturbed. It was not in nature to avoid comparing her own situation with such a one as her fancy painted her sister's might be. Some would think that the wife of a man, reputed to be worth an hundred and fifty thousand pounds, must be utterly mad to envy any one in the situation of a governess. But it was so, nevertheless; and she went to her pillow that night more dissatisfied than she had ever hitherto known herself, with the unequal way in which good and evil fortune seem to be disturbed amongst the children of men.

Better thoughts, however, came with the morning. She forgot to imagine that her distasteful husband's kindness was doled out more parsimoniously than it had been at first;—a thought, which of late had crossed her mind not unfrequently. She forbore most heroically

from thinking over the tempting chapter of events which *might* have happened. But her composure was severely shaken before the close of the day :—for, while they were sitting at dinner, her husband addressed her with, “ I say, Harriet, your mother tells me that she is expecting *that* Mr. Stukeley at the end of the week, who is going to take Susanna off our hands ;—and so, it is just as well to show him some civility. They will all dine here on Sunday.” She had wounded herself slightly with her knife, and was therefore in no haste to reply. What was she to do ?—she had resolved, if possible, to avoid meeting Stukeley—to be *not at home* when he called upon her, and she was now compelled, as it were, to build up a fresh wall against the incursion of the enemy. She has since said, that never was time so insupportably tedious as the days which intervened between Mr. Smith’s communication and the Sunday.

The day came at last. Harriet had remained away from church in consequence of a headache. Susanna had been with her on the Saturday, selfishly full of her own prospects—Stukeley

Priory was situated in the finest part of Hampshire—she was to be treated just as if she were one of the family—to visit with them—and the neighbourhood, Mr. Harry said, was genteel and sociable. Harriet was much hurt by the total want of feeling she displayed—the apathetic willingness she showed to abandon her mother,—nor was she, for a moment, imposed upon by any of her sister's high-sounding professions of being actuated by a sense of duty, in making a sacrifice for the sake of her own independence. She had, however, the more than justice to imagine herself in her sister's place, and built so many air-castles, and such high ones, that she paid for this dangerous indulgence with a sleepless night, and a nervous morning. Four o'clock came.—Never was Harriet longer over her toilette,—and yet, its result was, her appearing in the drawing-room, dressed in her most matronly gown, and having put on a cap, on the pretext of indisposition.

She sate, awaiting the arrival of her guests, in almost breathless impatience—and alone.—She did not know whether she was glad or

otherwise that she was thus to receive them : Mr. Smith not having come in from the news-room, his usual lounge after afternoon's service. She grew nervous—she began to fancy that they would never come,—and was walking up and down the room hastily, endeavouring to school her agitated spirit into something like composure, when a knock was heard at the hall-door. A moment's delay while hats, shawls, etc. were disposed of—and then a step,—*his* step upon the stairs. It was a dreadful moment, and she was aware of little more till the first greeting was over,—and Mr. Stukeley had begged permission to introduce a particular friend of his—Captain Duchran, (a showy, military man, with a bold eye, and a corresponding address)—“ he durst not have ventured on such a liberty every where,—but with such an old friend as Harriet—he begged her pardon, Mrs. Smith—(he hoped that lady would recognize his claim) he thought that he might venture to take such a liberty.”

Strive as she would, her colour rose ; and her hand trembled, as she shook his, and met that well-remembered face, now in the full

beauty of health, with its features settled into the firm contours of manhood. But her confusion told on the side of frigidity—and she was beginning to feel herself a little reconciled to the presence of one who had occupied so large a share of her thoughts, when a certain clattering sound upon the stairs made her shiver. The door was pushed open, and the master of the house made his appearance, clad in his shabbiest brown suit, having wet his best coat on his way from church, and not being willing to sit in his wet clothes “on any account, for no company whatever.”

She presented both the gentlemen to him ; and it did not escape her quick eye that a suppressed smile of amazement and ridicule passed over their faces, as she made the introduction ; and, she almost thought, was partaken of, and answered by Susan. This roused the better part of her nature at once,—in an instant, she became as composed as she had been agitated, and could play the hostess with an ease and dignity which surprised herself. Dinner was announced ;—Stukeley took his seat at her right hand ;—his manner puzzled

her, because it was changed from what she had known it, and she could not exactly define in what point. At last she settled it to her own satisfaction. He was more sentimental and less sincere than formerly, and disposed, so she thought, to be confidential, and to recur, in an under tone, to those pleasant days of the past. But she would neither understand nor encourage him,—for she felt the hollowness of his behaviour, and was careless whether or not he came to the conclusion that she had been changed into a haughty and reserved lady by her very extraordinary marriage.

What a comfort it is that the most trying evening will end, as well as the pleasantest merry-making!—When she had leisure to analyze her own thoughts, their sum was unmixed pain, the pain of being compelled to feel contempt in the place of former regard. Moreover, the idea that Susanna was using every artifice in her power, of flattery and implicit agreement with every word that he uttered, to make an impression upon Mr. Stukeley's heart, would occur to her, in spite of herself. And he was so unlike the hero of

the sick-chamber :—grown so frivolous and courtly. Perhaps she did him injustice,—but no measure of dislike was too great for Captain Duchran. *He* was positively odious ;—and Mr. Smith, what could he mean, by so angrily shutting up the Messiah in the very midst of her song ?—There was nothing but discomfort in every remembrance ; great was her vexation of spirit, all the greater for knowing that there was no one to whom she could or would confide her fancies—no one who would sympathize with her, and that any advice which she might offer to her sister, would assuredly be offered in vain.

But let me not be tedious, though a tale of small trials demands minuteness in detail. She was not astonished that Stukeley prolonged his stay many days beyond the time originally fixed for his departure ;—but she did feel surprized, and, in the secret of her heart, a little chagrined, that he made no further attempt to renew his old acquaintance with her ! Her sister's conduct she thought very unsisterly. She was going to leave home, but never came near her,—never had asked for her opinion, or

called for her sympathy ;—and her indisposition which rather increased, probably owing to the slightly irritated state of her mind, and the extreme delicacy of her baby's health were sufficient reasons for her staying at home. As for Mrs. Robinson she never stirred abroad, except upon state occasions ; but Susan was very, very unkind !—and surely she had not given Mr. Stukeley any offence ?

So ran the current of her thoughts, when, late on the Friday evening, she was considerably surprised by receiving a hurried message from her sister, entreating her to come to her immediately, “as she was in the utmost distress.” Harriet was startled, as may be supposed, and calling the old family servant in, questioned her.

“Are you sure, Ann, that there is no mistake ?”

“Quite sure, Ma'am ! she would have written, Ma'am, Miss Susanna would, but her hand was in such a tremble that she could not hold the pen.”

“Is my mother—?”

“Now don’t go frighten yourself—my mistress has nothing that ails her—she only went to bed a little tired, because—”

“What can have happened?—George,”—(to the servant who obeyed the bell) “call me a coach instantly—or stay,—I will not wait—my cloak and snow shoes!”

“Such a night!” exclaimed the man as he left the room, “and my mistress going to walk!”

“Are my mother and sister alone?”

“Quite alone, Ma’am.—Mr. Stukeley went away this morning, with Captain Duchran.”

“Went away!—you may go—I will follow you immediately,” said Harriet, relieved she knew not why.

The distance was soon passed over, in spite of the furious equinoctial gale, and rain which saturated her cloak, ere she had reached the end of the street, Susanna opened the door, with a face which was the very picture of dismay. “Only you, Harriet? how provoking! I thought I knew the knock.”

“You sent for me, though,—and I am here—what is the matter?”

“The matter,” repeated her sister pettishly, “what a comfort it is that mamma is in bed !”

“Is she ill then ? O why did you not tell me before ?”

“Pray—pray stop—do not go up stairs, I beg of you—she is quite well—quite as well as usual.”

“What can have happened, then, that you have sent for me at such an unusual hour ?”

“Come into the parlour,” said Susanna, and you shall know all.”

Harriet followed her sister, silently wondering what cause of grief could have stirred her to such a ferment of anxiety ; she seemed in that state of restlessness, in which stillness is impossible, and paced the room hastily, without speaking.

“Sister,” said Harriet, approaching her and taking her hand tenderly——She let it fall in an instant, and stood gazing upon Susanna with a frigid glance, from which, for the moment, reason seemed to have departed : at length she said in a low voice, “Sister, is that a wedding ring ?”

“It is,” replied the other, in the same sup-

pressed whisper, "we were married this morning—why are you so much shocked?"

"Look me in the face, Susanna, and answer me one question, Had he—had *you* any idea of this when he was our guest?"

Susanna hung her head, and blushed with shame and consciousness.

"It seems then," continued Harriet, "that we did not exchange confidences; I told you of my girlish folly—but you—O how have you hidden yourself from me!—But it matters not now," and her voice became firmer as she proceeded, "what is done, is done—where is your husband?—does my mother know?—I am afraid not—where is Stukeley?"

Her question opened the flood gates of Susanna's grief. They were to have departed on the next morning for Stukeley Priory.

"Have you written thither?—would it not be better to wait for Sir Giffard's answer?—I am afraid—they say that he is a very proud and passionate man."

"Written!—good Heavens! what would become of us, if he were to know it yet? but what matters it now?—Stukeley is gone—left

me at the church door, to go round the Rock with Captain Duchran in the Philadelphia, and he has not yet come back—Do not you hear the wind?—something must have befallen him!—and what am I to do?—what is to become of me?—he *would* go, in spite of all that I could say!” and she walked passionately to and fro, weeping and wringing her hands.

Nothing further was to be extracted from Susanna, and to comfort her seemed a task of even greater difficulty. What panacea is there which can allay the suspense of an ill-regulated mind? To enquire whether the pilot boats had returned, was the only step to be taken, and on this errand Harriet dispatched her own servant; this being done, nothing remained but to wait his return with patience. What strangely different thoughts occupied the two sisters, while they sate listening to the heavy rain falling, and the wind which blew in sudden gusts, as some writer quaintly says, “like the devil fetching his breath,”—the one enduring the agonies of suspense and the anxiety of uncertain prospects, the other feeling certain, no less from inward conviction, than the gist of

recent events, that her selfish sister had advised her to contract a marriage in every respect hateful to herself, not without some idea of reaping the benefit of her own advancement from the sacrifice !

So passed the hours till midnight. Martin had returned with tidings that the boats had none of them yet come back. Midnight brought Mr. Smith in search of his wife, exceedingly angry at her absence from home, which wrath he vented in no very choice language.

“ It does not look well, Harriet,” said he, “ being out of your own house at such a time of night, and leaving no word, as if you were coming to seek after strange gentlemen.”

“ Sir !” cried Harriet, starting to her feet.

“ Did you not,” pursued her coarse husband, “ call out *Harry* when my knock came to the door ?—I heard you—and do you think I never heard you painted his picture, and had a lock of his hair—it was your own sister told me. I say, Harriet, it does not look well !”

Here was another proof of Susanna’s artfulness ; but Harriet was past the power of her

wiles, and managed to command her temper, and repress the indignation which was so near her lips. "You are displeased at me," replied she with dignity, "without any cause; the gentleman, on account of whose absence my sister is suffering so much alarm, became her husband this morning!"

"O Harriet! what made you tell him?" cried Susan with selfish eagerness. Her sister made no reply, and had compassion enough, for her present distress, to refrain from even looking towards her.

"I am ready to attend you home, Sir," said she; "Martin shall stay, if you wish to send him any where else, Susanna;" and she left the room with as calm a demeanour, and as steady a step, as if she had not that moment been wounded to the heart, by discovering the heartless duplicity of her sister. It is amazing to think how much injustice and dishonesty some can bear to discover without their happiness and trust being utterly destroyed. I do not, however, profess to tell for how short a time Harriet closed her eyes that night.

Morning came, but still no news of the fugi-

tive : and as the gale had, for some hours, been very high, she began to entertain serious forebodings that no good news *would* come. She was sitting alone after breakfast, with her infant upon her knee, but thinking less of its smiles and dove-like eyes, than how she might best arm herself against any new shock, when her servant suddenly threw open the door and announced Mr. Stukeley. She hastily put her baby into his cradle,—rose,—and delighted that one at least, of her gloomy presentiments had not been fulfilled, ran forward to greet her visitor with an involuntarily cordial, “ O Harry ! ”—but she shrunk back, on being confronted by a tall stately, cold looking gentleman, six feet high at least, with a grey head, fearfully black eye brows, and large stern eyes beneath the same ; a figure, whom any painter would welcome as a perfect God-send, were he wishing to introduce a Spanish grandee into one of his pictures. “ *Sir Giffard Stukeley*,” said he, bowing very ceremoniously, “ I presume you were prepared to receive my son.”

Harriet was confounded beyond the power of speaking, and could only make a motion in-

tended to be a curtesy, and point to a chair upon which the Inquisitor (in the midst of all her perturbation, she could not avoid mentally giving that title to her visitor) vouchsafed to sit down. Then, fixing upon her face those awful eyes of his, he pursued his interrogatories.

“ I am here, Madam, most unexpectedly—an accidental occurrence obliged me suddenly to travel northward, on business, and when I came so near to this place, as to be within thirty miles of it, I could not resist the temptation of running over; more especially as I was beginning to think that my son was somewhat exceeding the limits of his furlough.”

“ Captain Duchran went to sea yesterday morning,” faltered out Harriet.

“ O then, most probably my son waited to see him off. They were old college friends, I would never have people forget old friends and kindnesses. I called upon your mother an hour ago, but was not so fortunate as to gain admittance: and have ventured to apply to you for my son’s address, which he omitted to send to me. This will explain to you the reason of

so early an intrusion. I cannot hear of him at any of the hotels."

"Really, Sir," said Harriet, whose confusion increased with every word she uttered, "I can hardly tell you—I am in some anxiety—I believe that Mr. Stukeley went with his friend on board the Philadelphia, and am in momentary expectation of hearing that he has returned. But here is a note from my sister which will tell us."

She seized the billet from the hands of the servant with eagerness, and broke the seal. Its contents were extraordinary. It seemed that the boatmen who took the two gentlemen out to the Philadelphia had believed that they were *both* on their way to America, and had therefore steered quietly homewards, while Harry and his friend were exchanging adieux in the cabin. But their return had been interrupted by the sudden storm I have described, and they had only just arrived bringing to Susanna the negative comfort of the idea that the newly married man was likely to be treated with an impromptu voyage to Baltimore, unless the Philadelphia should chance to fall in with some

vessel homeward bound. In spite of the nervous predicament in which her sister stood, with respect to Sir Giffard, Harriet could hardly help smiling at the singularity of the adventure; she was at a loss, however, in what manner she should communicate the tidings to the Baronet, and gave him her sister's note for himself to read. As his eye glanced over it, he seemed mightily disturbed.

"Here is something which I cannot understand—*Stukeley—my husband*," said he, with a bewildered air, "what . . ."

"Good Heavens! I had forgotten!" exclaimed she, with vivacity;—and then approaching him with that winning sweetness which is so irresistible in a young and beautiful woman, so graceful when worn to persuade a man whose age gives an almost filial character to the persuasion, "I did not mean to deceive you, Sir Giffard," said she, "but this note puts it out of my power, had I even thought of such unworthy conduct. Its contents are hardly more amazing to you than to myself. It was only last night, Sir, that I heard, for the first time,"—she spoke as stoutly as she

could, to hide her fear, “that Mr. Stukeley might present to you a daughter-in-law instead of a governess.”

It is not in the power of words to describe the changes which passed over Sir Giffard’s countenance while she proceeded, nor how the scorn, the surprise, the displeasure which alternately possessed his features, merged at last in a contempt of such concentrated bitterness, that it withered her to meet it. “And am I to *believe*,” said he, “that it was *only last night* for the first time, that you became acquainted with this—this unfortunate affair?”

Her spirit was somewhat aroused as she answered. “I can repeat my words, Sir Giffard, if you will: I have told neither more nor less than the truth, and to have told it once is enough. But as I see that you do *not* believe me, and as I feel my own and my mother’s honor concerned in the proving to you that this has been no scheme devised by us to entangle Mr. Stukeley in a connection unknown to the rest of his family, I must mention to you, what I hope will set your doubts at rest, as to our connivance;—a cir-

cumstance, Sir, which many women would find it impossible to produce in their defence, and which—but *you* are a gentleman,” (he bowed,) “you will understand the violence I am doing my feelings in attempting to satisfy my suspicions ; and respect my secret.”

She paused, uncertain in what manner she could shape her communication so as to give a hint and no more, of her own private feelings, and of the scene of last night, as regarded Mr. Smith’s ridiculous jealousy ; but, while she was debating with herself, whether she *could* explain herself, without going too far, even for such a good purpose as that of mollifying Sir Giffard’s suspicions, he arose, and took her hand with a lofty kindness which might even have become a prince :

“ Not a word more, madam, if you please,” said he, “ I ask for no confidences, I have no right to any, and I will believe you without putting you to any pain. The thing is done, and I must reconcile myself to it, as I best can. I mean no disrespect to yourself, far the contrary : for, had I come acquainted with so—so—*strange* an event, in any other mode, I should

probably have received the tidings less graciously. I am proud—but I can value such noble-mindedness as you have proved yourself to possess. You must forgive my freedom—I have heard something of your history, and I do not think that a marriage undertaken out of filial piety is chargeable with mercenary motives” (tears burst into Harriet’s eyes as he spoke). “If the young lady prove but half as exemplary a daughter, as I have heard her sister has been, and as I see, and *feel* that she must be, she shall find me not unreasonable, nor I hope unkind. In short, madam, I take my leave of you, with my respect for you much heightened by this interview. May God bless you ! for you deserve it.”

This unlooked for mildness on Sir Giffard’s part, completely overcame poor Harriet, to whom the language of sympathy and approbation had been so long an unknown tongue. She could not reply—but she felt that she was understood and esteemed, and that words mattered not ; and as the door closed upon her stately guest, she felt as if she would rather be—(for, for that instant she forgot the wig,

and the snuff, and the brown leggings, and the voice like the sound of a saw), in her own place at that moment, than in her sister's, if feelings were to be exchanged as well as fortunes. Such moments cancel the memory of long months of suffering and soreness of heart !

PART II.

A CHASM of six years is now to be crossed by the story-teller and his audience ;—six years unchequered by as many incidents. Upon returning from his forced voyage, Mr. Stukeley took his wife abroad,—for his father did not find in her the comfort which he had expected. Sir Giffard died before his son had been married quite two years, and Susanna was then exalted into the wife of one of the richest Baronets in Hampshire. Who will not sicken at the thought of the meanness of the human heart, when it is told that, from that moment, she slowly and steadily withdrew herself from her own family ! She pleaded that her health

was bad—she was an indifferent correspondent ;—Sir Harry expected her to devote so much of her time to him. She had even recourse to the shameful subterfuge of pretending to be hurt by some passage in one of her mother's letters,—who, never very clear-headed, grew more misty and confused every day, and was fast approaching a second state of childishness. After this, total silence ensued ;—Harriet was too indignant to waste any further time in keeping up a correspondence with one so heartless,—and Sir Harry Stukeley finally fixed his residence at Florence. Poor Mrs. Robinson thought that letters were very long in coming, and used to expatiate to every one that called upon Susanna's devotedness to her young family--forgetting, however often set right, that her married life was unblest by any child.

And where was Harriet at the end of these six years ?—Very near the spot at which she stood on her wedding day ;—so indulgently had time treated her round cheeks, and her bright eyes. Some ancient writer quaintly affirms that—" there is noe cosmeticke like a

gode herte," and, in her case, the secret seemed worth knowing, so little changed was her loveliness, except, perhaps, that the expression of her features was heightened by her acquaintance with the affections of maternity.

" Her pleasing person she with care adorned,"

some said, with too much solicitude ; but if her love of her toilette was a foible, it was almost her only one ; nor did she indulge in it to enhance the value of her charms in the world's opinion, as she had almost entirely given up society, being willing to make any sacrifice for the preservation of peace at home. Years had not sweetened Mr. Smith's originally saturnine and churlish temper ;—his concession in the matter of receiving Mrs. Robinson into his house, must be regarded partly as a measure by which so much unnecessary outlay of money was saved—partly, as being a return for his wife's uniform kindness towards a crew of the vulgarest husband's relations, wherewith it ever pleased Heaven to try the patience of an unfortunate woman ; Mr. Smith having

been always considered, not only as the great man, but also the gentleman of the family.

It was well that Harriet's cheerfulness of spirit prevented her from dwelling long upon any annoyance, otherwise the addition to her home trials of the occasional visits of her husband's first cousin, Mrs. Crickett, would have been sufficient to fret her patience to death. This was an ignorant, surly-tempered fat woman, (how oppressive, by the way, is the ill-humour of the corpulent, were it only for giving the lie to a jolly old proverb!)—a woman who left trouble and heart-burning behind her wherever she went, and only relaxed her dislike of her kind, in the case of Harriet, upon whom she was willing to bestow much more of her company than was agreeable ; and yet the object of her favour was a poor recipient of scandal—she had nothing to contribute to Mrs. Crickett's *cairn* of aversions and evil rumours. That lady, too, had the happy knack of breaking in upon her friends at those peculiarly precious moments of leisure, when the company of one's nearest and dearest friends is felt to be an annoyance. One

day, she would interrupt a music lesson, (Harriet was indefatigable in keeping up her music, in spite of the palsyng lack of the stimulus afforded by any occasional listener, except her master)—she would, on another, show her unwelcome face when the young mother (with her child asleep beside her) was sitting absorbed in the perusal of some favourite book, and had just reached that most interesting point, at which one devours rather than reads its pages. She was remarkable for her contempt of wind and rain if she wished to come abroad; and for her terror of so little as a zephyr or a dew-fall when it was time to go home. She always came when Mr. Smith was absent on a journey;—"Cousin Harriet must feel so lonely!"—and made herself so completely distasteful to her relative, that, in the secret playfulness of her heart, the latter used to vent her vexation by calling her "her Arch-antipathy."

One morning Mrs. Smith had scarcely opened her piano to luxuriate in the first trial of some of Beethoven's immortal compositions for that instrument, when the well-known

tramp and cough were heard in the anti-drawing-room. For once, Harriet was resolved to try whether her visitor was penetrable by a broad hint, and played on sedulously, till a huge hand was spread upon her shoulder, and she had no further excuse for not turning round, and wishing her wearisome guest good morning.

“ Good morning, cousin Harriet !—I am come in good time, I see, to prevent you wearing yourself to a shadow over that music ;—mercy upon us ! what sums of money it has cost you !” and, heaving an enormous sigh, she plunged into a well-cushioned easy chair.

“ Were you not afraid,” said Harriet archly, “ to venture out on such a wild day ?”

“ Me, love ?—O, it’s very tolerable out of doors, only a little wind, I assure you ;—not that I would go every where, I promise you ; but I thought you would be wondering what was become of me, and you never sent to enquire after me. Those servants of yours have a fine easy life of it, and, mercy upon us ! what wages you give them !”

“ I will profit by your hint another time,” thought Harriet, “ but I fear it will not avail me much.”

“ Bless me, Cousin ! and so you have had your rooms new furnished since I was here ! well to be sure, and in the bad times, too !—and, as I have a soul to be saved, with silk damask ! I tell you what, I think Smith had better mind what he is about ; silk damask, indeed !”

“ Why,” replied Harriet, always glad to steer clear of persons, “ the chintz was dropping to pieces ;—I hope, however, that you admire my taste ?”

“ Yours, is it ? red enough in all conscience !—and, come near me, your cap !—Valenciennes, I declare !—ah !—well, well,—poor thing ! I hope what people say isn’t true !” and she fetched another ominous and plethoric sigh—but Harriet’s curiosity was still undisturbed. She then tried fresh ground : “ Have you been out lately ?”

“ Scarcely at all for this last month, since Mamma has been confined above stairs.”

“ Ay, she’ll not last long, I reckon. Did Smith tell you that Blackie and Dunstan-ridge had failed ?”

“ No, indeed,” replied Harriet, yawning ; “ you know Mr. Smith cannot bear to be asked any questions about his business.”

“ He cannot bear !—you do not care—that is the way it goes. Cousin Harriet, I hear strange tales about Smith ;—he should buy cheaper lace for you than Valenciennes ;—and a worsted damask, ay, or a good moreen might serve him to sit upon, if all tales are true I hear. Bad times indeed ?—and look at merchant’s wives sitting, like queens, in their silks and satins on week-day mornings, with their feet upon footstools. Talk to me of bad times ! I wonder what all their grandeur will end in !”

“ Upon my word, cousin, I think you must be bilious ;—you don’t often scold me in this way.”

“ Scold ?—mercy on us ! me scold a fly !—People are talking, cousin Harriet,—people are talking, and I am sorry for you.—I heard Mr.

Bland say it was only this morning that he had been told that Smith——”

“ You must excuse my listening,” said Harriet, turning towards her instrument with a very decided air ; “ you know I never listen to anything, save my own music.”

“ Upon my word ! high and mighty with a vengeance ! What will you say, my lady, if your husband be a bankrupt before he is a month older ?”

“ I will never step out of my way to meet any sorrow ;—these left-hand passages are so cramped,” and she ran over the keys.”

“ Let me tell you,” cried the widow, “ that Smith is behaving shamefully, if——

“ Nay cousin, if you please, no reflections upon my husband ! It is wrong in you to speak them, and I *will* not listen to them,”—and she began in good earnest and bad time.

“ How is your sister, Lady Stukeley, and when did you hear from her last ?” cried Mrs. Crickett, raising her voice, so as even to drown the thunder of Broadwood’s *best patent grand*,

“ I should not a bit wonder if it prove that her match turns out the best of the two, after all ! ”

“ I must leave you,” said Harriet, rising and drawing on her gloves impatiently ; “ good morning — I am sorry that I cannot stay with you ; I will send you in some luncheon directly, and hope you will remain till you are rested.”

There was, indeed, no other way of preventing Mrs. Crickett from disburdening her satchell of its contents, but that of leaving her in solitude ; and Harriet hoped that she would depart speedily. She stayed, however, to do justice to the luncheon, and, it has been surmised, confided a part of her secret to the butler, who was a discreet man, with a fine solemn face for a confidence. As for her ill-omened gossip, it did not linger in Harriet’s ear for an hour : she had been always spared the coming in contact with money matters, by Mr. Smith insisting to pay every bill belonging to the house ; and, as he had done so without any objection, and had duly put into her hands a sum sufficient for her own private

expenses and charities, she dismissed the subject from her mind, perhaps, too thoughtlessly; but she had been taught this way of treating grievances by her trying and cheerless lot.

But even Harriet's power of casting off her cares might not, in this instance, have availed her, had not a greater anxiety stared her in the face. Mrs. Robinson's health declined with a rapidity and steadiness which defied the skill of medicine. Death could only be a happy release to the invalid, for she had lost one sense of enjoyment and one faculty after another; but to her daughter the prospect of being deprived of one of her only two sources of comfort was most appalling. She devoted herself entirely to her mother—rarely left her chamber, and attended to her *indications* (she had hardly strength of mind, or connection of ideas enough to express her *wishes*) with promptitude and delight that she was permitted to be able to smooth the bed of death. Alas! she felt the bitterness of being alone when any calamity was impending! Of late, it had become her husband's habit to remain long and late at the counting-house, and¹³

never once crossed the threshold of his dying inmate's chamber,—“ For,” as he said, “ what good could he do to her ?—she *must* die ! ”

At length, the close of Mrs. Robinson's in-offensive life was at hand. Harriet was sitting one evening by her mother's bed, waiting, in melancholy silence, for the arrival of the medical man, and trying to school herself into resignation, when a loud outcry in the house below, caught her attention. All that day there had been something astir :—messengers coming to and fro—gentlemen, who insisted upon seeing Mr. Smith, and would hardly believe the servants who repeated again and again that he was not to be seen,—not at home,—but Harriet had been too much absorbed in her own affliction to notice these disturbances ; and it had seemed as if her maid Tyrell had been able to quiet them more than once. It might be, too, that an indefinable dread prevented her asking any questions. Now however, the tumult approached nearer than it had hitherto done. Several of the servants were noisily ascending the stairs, and even the invalid was

disturbed, turned her head on her pillow, and began uneasily to moan and mutter. Harriet went out to see what was the cause of all this. —She had scarcely crossed the threshold when the noise redoubled on her appearance. “There she is!—I will have what is owing to me!—Pay me my wages!” were repeated in as many different tones of insolence, as there were different speakers. Tyrell alone endeavoured to keep some order among the irritated group.

“For shame!—if you *will* disturb my mistress now, cannot you be a little quieter—and with death yonder?”

“What is to be done?” cried Harriet, turning deadly pale, “is your master at home, Tyrell?”

“For God’s sake, madam,” replied the faithful servant, “do not ask!—and do you, if you have any decency, let be till to-morrow!”

“I’ll go this instant out of the house, as soon as ever my wages are paid!” cried one.

“You know my mistress never pays any wages.”

“Who is to pay us then, I wonder?” said

the butler insolently, "Master's broke, and run away—and there will be bailiffs here to-morrow."

"I say Tom, we had better help ourselves than get nothing."

"Silence, you brutes or worse!" exclaimed Tyrell,—“lean on me, madam.”

"No—no—no," cried Harriet gasping for breath, and tottering towards the door of her mother's chamber, "I have—tell me how much is owing to you.—Tyrell, go, bring my purse—I will divide the money among them."

One said five guineas—one fifteen, and so forth. She had received some money from her husband, a week or two before, which she had never spent, and hoping it might be sufficient to satisfy them, snatched the purse from the hands of her maid, who had been as quick as lightning, and counted eagerly the gold and bank notes, which it contained. "Thank God, here is just enough, and a guinea over!—Take it, take it all!—and leave me at peace!"

"Surely, madam, you are not going to leave yourself with only that one guinea?—Who knows what you may want yourself?—for it's

all true about master's running off—the Lord knows where.”

“No—no—they shall have it all! only let me be at peace. Tyrell, you will not desert me, I am sure!—Come with me,”—and she turned and left the gaping crowd, half discontented that they had no legitimate reason for prolonging the uproar.

She found the doctor in her mother's chamber. He pronounced it to be his opinion that Mrs. Robinson could not possibly live through the night,—she was sinking so rapidly. Harriet walked to the fire-place, without knowing that she moved. She leaned her forehead against the chimney-piece, whilst the press of agonizing thoughts which swept across her brain, almost entirely deprived her of reason and recollection. The physician had heard the news of Mr. Smith having absconded, in consequence of his shameful bankruptcy,—and though he was old, and seasoned to scenes of domestic affliction, tears streamed down his cheeks, as he took her burning hand between his own, and said gently, “Dear madam, it is God's will!”

“Is all over?” said Harriet, starting, as if from a trance.

“Not yet—she may linger an hour or two; but this—this other cruel news—if I can be of any use—if I can see any body—”

“Not to-night, doctor,” replied Harriet with emotion, “I will forget it, if I can, to-night! it is *hers*—and it is God’s merciful will, that she is taken away at this hour! Let us pray that she may suffer no more—I feel your kindness, and Heaven bless you for it, but I do not need it *now*!”

And as she spoke, she knelt solemnly down at her mother’s bed-side. The invalid seemed placidly asleep. Harriet approached, as close as she could, to her emaciated cheek, and prayed silently,—and O with what a sincerity of agony!—for strength to strive with the burden laid upon her. As she thus poured out her sorrow, the sting of her distress seemed to be gradually withdrawn from her. She began to think, with a calmness which surprised herself, that her mother was departing from her, at that moment, when the sacrifice which she had made was ceasing to avail. She arose from

her knees, somewhat more tranquil—she was now willing to resign that darling mother into the hands of Him who made her,—and said softly to the medical man, who regarded her almost with veneration: “There is nothing more which can be done for her?”

“Nothing.”

“Susanna!” cried the invalid faintly, partially opening her eyes. Harriet could not contain herself;—she stole to the bed gently, and seizing the clammy hand which was extended upon the counterpane, murmured “It is I—it is your Harriet!”

“Ay—ay—I know the voice. O, you have been a good daughter to me!—Bless you, Harriet!—I feel no pain:—I am going to sleep again!” and with these words upon her lips, and a smile of affection upon her face, as she turned her glazing eyes upon the kneeling mourner beside her, her spirit passed peacefully away. The benevolent physician stole quietly from the room, and Harriet was alone with the dead.

It was with a feeling of deep submission as well as of natural awe, that she closed the

eyes of her departed parent, folded her hands upon her bosom, and then gazed silently upon her remains. Most beautiful is woman's strength of mind at such a moment—but perhaps Harriet was stunned into quietness by the shock of her new calamity. However this might be, she bent over the body with a tearful but not despairing grief,—feeling the full comfort of the conviction that this was the signal interposition of a merciful Providence in behalf of her mother. She laid herself down upon the bed beside the corpse; and her attendants, who wondered at the deep silence which prevailed in the chamber of death, when at last they ventured to enter it, found her placidly asleep, by the side of the parent for whom she had sacrificed so much—and who was now at rest !

Next morning the town was ringing with the tale of Mr. Smith's flight,—the false entries found in his books,—and not a few other circumstances, which conspired to make his failure a peculiarly disgraceful one: the more so, as he had always borne a fair character. The charge of extravagance had been brought

against his wife, by those who had no other fault wherewith to charge her :—whereas, her charities had always exceeded her personal expenditure, and if, as has been hinted, she was a little too fond of dress, she had never kept much company, and had been always allowed by her husband to remain in perfect ignorance as to the state of his affairs. But the merchant's wife is always a favourite mark on such occasions ; and as he had placed himself beyond the reach of his creditors, by an untimely flight, she was to be the person upon whom their concentrated vengeance was to fall. And who can wonder that such should be the case ? Mr. Smith was known to have settled a very sufficient competence upon her.

Ignorant in matters of business, and guileless as a child, as she was,—her high principle and delicate sense of honour prompted her to take an immediate and decided step. She called for the solicitor, in whose keeping the original deed of settlement was deposited, and conferred with him long and earnestly, and having requested a respite from all annoyance until her mother's remains were interred—

alas! she had no male relation to follow them to their last home!—summoned all the principal resident creditors, intimating to them that she had some communication to make to them.

They came, on the morning after poor Mrs. Robinson's funeral,—with heated tempers, and inflexibly stern visages, as they entered the merchant's house, glittering and glowing with all the resplendence of its new decorations. How many curse was vented upon them! how many a vow of the hard measure they would deal out to her!

Harriet felt her heart sink within her, as one by one they entered her drawing-room, scarcely condescending to bestow the commonest greeting upon so young and lovely a woman, so cruelly abandoned. She was sitting, with her solicitor at her side, dressed in the most unobtrusively simple mourning possible, and for a moment, felt so entirely overcome, as to be unable even to look up. But she rallied her spirits, and desired her guests to be seated. She was almost unable to speak,—feeling, for the first time, the utter helplessness

of a deserted wife,—but she feared to exasperate them by any needless delay, and said tremulously, “I am placed in a most painful situation, gentlemen, as you must be aware.”

The chorus replied with a growl of assent.

“I am informed by my friend Mr. Horne,” continued she, “that the engagements of my unfortunate husband greatly exceed his means of meeting them.—I am afraid that I do not express myself clearly.”

“We all understand you. It is true enough.”

“I am told too, gentlemen, that some blame has been laid upon me,—the blame of having, in some respects, been thoughtlessly expensive. I was as innocent of any intention to do wrong, as a child ; for, indeed, I never had the remotest idea that Mr. Smith’s circumstances were at all embarrassed,—and I have sent for you to put you in possession of what this house contains, and to beg that you will receive at my hands such small retribution as it is in my power to make.” She could say no more,—and Mr. Horne, pointing to a parchment, the contents of which he was willing to

read, if required, briefly explained that she had insisted upon giving up her marriage settlement for the benefit of her husband's creditors.

This generosity, or as some openly called it, folly on her part, when once believed—(how long it is before a crowd of angry and worldly people can be convinced of the reality of any noble or disinterested actions !)—wrought an immediate change upon the temper and bearing of the assembled men, to most of whom Harriet was personally a stranger. Beetle brows were unknit, surly voices smoothed,—it was very proper—it was very handsome ;—some even got the length of *it was a pity !*—and what would Mrs. Smith do ? Mr. Horne was ready with his answer :—Harriet having strained her self-possession to its utmost, and left the room, when she found it beginning to fail her. The ornaments she possessed, when sold, would bring a sum sufficient, with the addition of some small savings, to maintain her respectably until she had decided upon her future plans.

“ And what is to become of Master Hugo ?” asked the same reasonable personage.

Mr. Horne replied that it would be much easier for her to bring him up upon the fruits of her own exertions, than to allow any stigma which could be prevented to attach itself to his or her name. In short, Mrs. Smith had made up her plans.

“ So soon ?—and in the absence of her husband !”

Even so—it was concluded that he would not return. The servants had been all discharged, and the lady would remain for only another night under that roof. She had sent for her son from the school at which she had placed him thus early, (it was guessed) to be out of the reach of his father’s example, and had already engaged lodgings suited to their fallen fortunes.

“ Upon my word,” said one of the roughest of the party,—“ she is a very gallant little woman !—It is hard that she must suffer for Smith’s knavery !”

Mr. Horne replied, that so far from suffer-

ing, the act she had performed was most particularly satisfactory to Harriet's own private feelings. This was enigmatical to most of the party—but it was true. She had viewed it, in conjunction with her husband's unfeeling desertion, as a breaking of the tie which had united them. The creditors then departed, marvellously softened, and desired that their thanks might be conveyed to Mrs. Smith, and their grateful sense of her handsome conduct,—and that they should be truly happy to assist her in any arrangement for her convenience, which she might point out. The house was all quiet again,—and Harriet left alone, with the faithful Tyrrell, who bluntly and decidedly refused to leave her.

The immediate call upon her energies had ceased. She had now leisure dispassionately to look to the future. She had already (with a happy decision which would by some be stigmatized as imprudence) resolved upon having recourse to her musical talents. She was young and strong;—her voice she knew was something beyond good. She was already well acquainted with the science of music, and her

confidence in her own powers of application to make the voice available, and to perfect her knowledge of the science, was well grounded. She determined —— but a dark shadow came and over-clouded the prospect. What if Mr. Smith should re-appear? The mere fancy made her turn sick at heart.

“It will not do,” she said, “to terrify myself with such phantoms,” and to divert her mind from its fears, she commenced the painful task of collecting what she might honestly call her own possessions—examining letters—burning papers, etc., etc. One heap she committed to the flames, not without a sigh:—a sort of journal kept during the happy six months, in which Stukeley had been her father’s guest. He was now her sister’s husband, and both had cast her off! “Well, though it is very hard,” said she, smothering her rising sorrow,—“I have my Hugo left to me still.”

Night overtook her, ere her task was completed. She was thankful to feel herself so weary that she was sure she must sleep—and she did sleep, after a few melancholy thoughts, and a heartfelt prayer,—and she dreamed—but

the vision, an impossible mixture of present, past, and future, was suddenly broken.

Our senses are not available in the first moment when we start awake. She fancied that she had heard the well-known sound of the snap-key, jingling in the lock at the front door, as on the nights when her husband was detained late at his counting-house. She started up in bed, and eagerly stretched forward to listen for a repetition of the sound. It was no delusion;—there *was* a step upon the stair!—She knew its very softest tread—the one of all others, which it most terrified her to recognize.—Her husband come back—after the letter he had left on the counting-house desk—that he should be seen and heard of no more—and come back at that dead hour!—it could not be for good! She listened again,—the feet passed her chamber-door—she heard them distinctly, though her terror began to amount almost to delirium. They returned—the door opened—and Mr. Smith plodded in—unkempt, and travel soiled, with a desperation of expression set on his coarse features, which made them positively hideous.

Harriet sate upright in bed, gazing upon him in perfect silence. He took the night-lamp from the hearth, and approached her. She distinctly saw the butt-end of a pistol peeping out of the breast pocket of his rough coat.

“Good Heavens !” exclaimed she, “what has brought you hither at this awful time?”

“You *are* awake,” replied he, in his usual dry tone :—“I will tell you.”

“What is it?”—She trembled so that she could hardly speak :—“what can it be?”

“There is no one in the house but you,” continued he.

“None—save Tyrell.—The servants are all gone. She is sleeping in the nursery.”

“I am going to sail for Tortola to-morrow, with the morning’s tide.”

“Where have you been all this time ? Did you know that my mother was dead?”

“All the better :—where I have been is no one’s concern. I have found out that the settlement I made upon you is no longer in Mr. Horne’s keeping.—You have it—it is on the West Indian estates—I will receive the

rents for you, unless—" (with a grin) "you are disposed for a voyage thither yourself."

"I have it not," replied she, terrified by the reckless coolness of his manner.

"The devil!—Then you must get up, and go to Mr. Horne, and get it from him on any pretext, only get it you must."

"At this time of night!"—He seized her arm violently,—for believing him to be possessed by a sudden fit of insanity, she was on the point of ringing the bell to summon Tyrell to her assistance.

"What are you about?—I *must* have that deed, directly—before I sail."

"I have parted with it," replied she, endeavouring to sustain her fast sinking composure.

"*What*, woman!—what do you dare to tell me?"—and he grasped her arm so fiercely, that she shrieked aloud. Tyrell awakened.

"I gave it up to your creditors this morning.—Thank God, Tyrell is coming—I hear her!—Help! help! he is murdering me!"

He took the pistol from his breast, and cocked it. "Why! you eternal fool!—I will

fire upon whoever enters here !—you have made yourself, and our boy, and myself beggars.”

At this instant the cries of the terrified attendant were heard. She had opened the drawing-room windows, and was calling loudly for help.—“They are coming, my lady ! coming directly !”

“Why, you eternal fool !” shouted Smith, transported by his passion to utter frenzy,—“will you bring the watch upon me ?—You will ruin us all.”

Quick steps were heard descending the stairs. The hall door was opened, and the guardians of the night admitted by Tyrell. There were three doors into Harriet’s chamber. Her wretched husband flew and secured two of them. Ere he could reach the third, his wife was on the floor, and had snatched the pistol from his hand.

“This way !” cried the watchman upon the stairs.

“Give me that pistol !” shouted the desperate man.

“No, no !” cried she, “fly while you can ! they will force the door !—down the back

stairs—I will send you—I will—” and with a last exertion of force she wrested herself free from his grasp, and whirled the weapon of death through the window. Those without heard the sound, as it crashed through into the street, and under the idea that the miscreant was attempting an escape, hastened round to prevent him. They found nothing, however, save the stock and the barrel lying in two separate places, and made haste back to the house. They had to force the door of Harriet’s chamber,—and when they entered it, she was lying upon the floor, thoroughly insensible, with a rent fragment of cloth, clutched fast in her hand !

* * * * *

I have reached the termination of Harriet’s early trials. These last shocks were almost too much for even her elastic spirit to recover from ; but the Almighty sends healing with Time, and she was able, ere long, to pursue her original intentions : now, unshackled by any one,—for months elapsed ere she heard of Smith, whose absence from England was a matter of necessity. To conclude my tale as

respects him, I should say, that having found out his retreat, this excellent and forgiving creature actually contrived to send him occasional supplies of money, a kindness which he had neither heart to feel, nor decency to acknowledge, save by reiterated importunities. But he only lived four years after his failure, and it was a relief to every body to be able to forget one, whose character was so little endearing, and whose solitary kind action had been paid for by the happiness of his wife's youth.

She was thenceforth left to her own devices ; at the time when he disappeared from England, little more than twenty-five years of age, with good health, and a spirit which had proved too strong to be broken by the wearing of daily vexation, or the thnnder-clap of sudden calamity. She began by consigning Hugo to the care of an excellent old clergyman who had known Mrs. Robinson in the days of her prosperity,—and then, she,—who had never in her life, travelled further than to London, on her miserable wedding journey,—prepared, alone, to encounter the difficulties of a con-

tinental tour. In the first agony of her bereavement, she had written to the Stukeleys, mentioning her future plans. She received, only the day before she left England, a laconic answer, containing a proper set of phrases of regret for the loss of "their excellent parent," and an utter discouragement of her *thinking of coming to Italy*. She was too proud to ask for further counsel or assistance from such cold-hearted relatives, and pursued her own straight-forward way, undismayed by the sneers and forebodings of the million, always more ready to censure than to assist.

What befell her from this time, until she reappeared as Madame Fabbroni, (the name given to her in the Conservatorio where she studied) the friend, from whom I learned the foregoing particulars, could not, or would not tell me, not so much as whether she ever did meet with her unkind sister and her weak husband, nor the place to which Mr. Smith had fled, and in which he perished, lamented by no one ; I suppose it to have been some of the smaller West India Islands.

I have followed Harriet through her trials ;

—there is no need to record her triumphs, which, as a concert singer, were without drawback or alloy. The same enthusiasm and buoyancy of spirit which had maintained her through the miseries of her married life, conducted her to success in the profession she had chosen ; and, had she consented to appear upon the stage, she might doubtless have realized a splendid fortune, as it is probable that her acting might have equalled her singing. As it was, she gave to her son the education of a gentleman,—sent him to college, as his wishes inclined towards the church ;—and, on the evening when I first heard her, bade farewell to the plaudits and excitements of public life, to retire with him to a living which had been presented to him by a nobleman who had heard a part of her story,—and thus, in the prime of her beauty and talents, withdrew to its seclusion,—the happiest woman in England, followed by the regrets of many, and the affectionate regard of the few whom she had received as friends.

THE STREETS, No. VI.

A PROCESSION DAY.

IN spite of the superior experience of the travelled, who quench the first mention of any thing at home being worth enjoying, with,—“ When I was driving along the Linden strasse at Vienna——” or, “ at Rome they do thus——” in spite of the wisdom of the austere and learned, who rebuke one’s gaiety with—“ loss of time !” “ frivolity !” etc. etc. etc.—a sight is a good thing, and a profitable one, if rightly taken,—from the antics of Punch, or a rueful monkey compelled to execute *entrechats* in a spangled turban and crimson petticoat, up to the more stately shows of the

ascent of a balloon, a review, or a procession. There is always, to me, a great pleasure in watching the motions and the moods of a crowd of people; and if their gathering be a little tricked out with the trumpery of flags and devices, the show is surely none the worse because it pleases the eyes of some—let them be of no higher class than sweeps and servant maids—as well as furnishes food for the fancies of the day-dreamer.

But, if the spectacle happen to chime in with our own humour, even we may not look upon the tinsel, and be not ashamed to smile, though, like Goldsmith's Tenterden lady, "we have been at London!" For instance, if it be an election procession, (as it is to-day) and our favourite candidate is to be chaired, we can regard it with peculiar complacency, and make allowance for the zealous dissonance of provincial wind instruments,—and for the inscriptions upon banners, more pompous than wise. Come, then, courteous companion, whoever you be, that have accompanied us in our former rambles, draw your easy chair close to this open window,—we will look out

into the street beneath us, and chat pleasantly about the things which have been a-doing for the last ten days, till the procession shall pass by. This is the very morning for a gala,—bright, but not too sultry, breezy, but not boisterous :—a Saturday morning, when the throngs of market carts, with their load of country ware and country people, give such a peculiar air of health and plenty to our thoroughfares. The shower of last night has laid the dust beautifully ; and that row of stunted elms in yonder opposite churchyard looks positively tempting, dressed in the fresh spring green of May. They will be torn and miserable enough before night—for the children have already discovered that a show looks all the better for being seen whilst swinging among green boughs. It were useless to attempt to settle to any serious occupation on this, the last day of the week, after the foregoing six have been spent in the bustle and excitement of electioneering ;—

“ You were in the ——— interest, of course ? ”

Truce to politics, *notre ami*—what if we

were venal enough to belong to both sides, as occasion served?—at all events, we are triumphant now. What a stir the contest made! or rather *bargain* it should be called, when the strife was betwixt purse and purse, rather than principle and principle! But let us leave the question of bribery, and all other grave questions, for the present, and content ourselves with remembering the humours of the days of struggle. No enthusiasm in the English character, as foreigners sometimes complain!—why, for the last week, our streets have worn an appearance positively carnivalesque!—the fronts of the large shops exhibiting gay party-colours, and the windows of all such as were near the scene of action, occupied, from morning till evening, by animated groups of people who could not stay at home, but must come down, in despite of blazing sun and biting wind, to see the polling. And it was a curious sight;—the street, at the upper end of which the hustings stood, presented the unique picture of a pavement of heads of persons of all classes, all ages, all interests, each one gaily caparisoned with red or blue

ribbons,—women, with children on their backs, despising the terrors of a crowd, nay, liking the scene all the better for a tolerably strict squeeze now and then ;—gentlemen haranguing *independent freemen*, and shaking hands pump fashion, with as many as showed a tendency towards the right colour, till one would think that every canvasser must have bespoken spare muscles and sinews for the occasion, to abide the strain of that tremendous cordiality ;— *macaronies* receiving the confidences of mud-larks ;—short-sighted personages endowed with a miraculous clearness of vision :—and all this mass of human life rammed into a comparatively narrow street, so tightly, that you could hardly guess how a single individual could be extricated therefrom without the consent of his thousand neighbours. Once in every half hour, however, the riddle was solved, by some riot or other taking place near to the hustings,—then the quick, heavy, pommelling sound of fists was heard,—then the sharper notes of the constables' staves, (who endeavoured to part the combatants, *à la St. John Long*, by es-

tablishing a system of counter-irritation) and the huge company of people were dispersed hither and thither, like beads spilled out of a box, expanding themselves over every neighbouring street, court, and alley, to re-assemble as soon as the temporary feud (most probably undertaken for some party token) was pacified.

How intense was the interest displayed by the spectators—intense as it was unreasonable ! It is, indeed, curious to think with how little prepossession, on what slight ground of reason, the most passive and phlegmatic may, at such a time, be wrought up into a state which gives to the most trite phrases of oratory the power of pure original eloquence, and makes you as sensible of the sting of some inane party sarcasm, as if it were envenomed by the wit of a Wolcot or a Swift. What can be less edifying, for instance, than the evening speeches of the opposing candidates, who, hoarse and jaded, and worn out by anxiety, must be, with rare exceptions, far past the power of commanding any words or thoughts beyond the merest common-places sufficient to elicit

cheers from the mob of their partizans. Yet the excitement and delight are not to be forgotten with which, on a former occasion, we awaited, in a balcony, the return of the candidate of our choice from the hustings,—and the avidity with which we listened to him when he did come! It was at the beginning of winter,—fair, frosty weather,—a bright crescent moon, with half a dozen stars around her, smiled peacefully down upon the street beneath us, touching the gathering groups with an imperfect shine made them absolutely picturesque. At last, after long waiting, the far-off roll of drums was distinctly heard, then the sound of wind instruments ;—how willingly was their want of taste, tune, and time forgiven! And when the procession filed close up under our windows, amid the cheers of the people, who made way for their favorite to pass—the feeling of the moment was more deliciously intense than we can now easily bring ourselves to believe.

And how the gentler half of our inhabitants have been moved on both sides of the question. *Place aux dames* on every possible occasion ;—

but we wonder why they should ever enter the coil of politics, why they should ever involve themselves in the considerations of those heart-perplexing mysteries which the wisest and best experienced of men are scarcely able to unravel,—why, when by their position they are necessarily and happily fenced off from the knowledge of so much that is acting around them, they should come forward to debate and wrangle upon subjects on which they cannot possibly be fully informed without partially unsexing themselves. Doubtless there have been many women (there are some among us at this moment) who could assume such cares and thoughts without losing much of that retired dignity which is so exclusively feminine; nor are the cold and indifferent worthy of our praise or love. How do our hearts go along with the Spanish martyr sisters, who suffered at the stake, together with their brother, a priest, and when pressed (with the dread of mortal torments before their eyes,) to abjure their faith, simply and briefly refused, alleging “that they were sure that what their brother believed must be the truth,” and adding,

“ he is too wise to be wrong, and too good to deceive us.” How noble, how excellent was this their constancy,—their trust in his stronger mind ! How much more endearing this modesty of their reply than if they had wordily expatiated upon the erroneous doctrines of the persecuting church ! How much higher toned than the pretension, in the strength whereof so many enter into the arena of controversy, with as much confidence as if they wielded an iron mace instead of a bull-rush. And, only because we love them all the more for thus enlisting their sympathies in what concerns their nearest and dearest, can we forgive them, if, at a time like the present, the enthusiasm of their natural temperament lead them into not a few extravagancies, and converts them into fierce and devoted partizans ; and we are not disposed to do more than smile because one is won by the noble air and manly address of her favourite, and the other professes herself to be convinced by the liberality of his opponent’s sentiments and declarations. The fire, which has thus been kindled, will soon subside ;—before a week is

over, all this bitterness and heat will soon be forgotten like the things of a dream. Heaven forbid that our English wives and sisters should cease to think as well as feel ; but forbid it also, that they should become clamorous and eager disputants, or worse, intrigueses, manœuvring themselves into power and influence by means of the fascinations with which they have been so liberally endowed.

But this discursiveness (for which, by the way, we shall have some difficulty in obtaining a pardon) must not deprive us of the use of our eyes. The street is now filling rapidly ;—the groups of quiet and patient sight-seers, who, for the last two hours, have occupied all the good places upon steps, etc. have received many important additions, since we took our last survey. Every moment, the crowd is increased and animated by some artizan, dressed in his Sunday clothes, with a rosette at his button hole, or some tall hoyden of a girl, with a red-hot face, loose bonnet strings, and short petticoats, who is thoroughly *au fait* as to all the arrangements of the procession, having left it at another part of the

town, and run hither. And only remark the ridiculous figures of some of the children, who, ever and anon, in spite of the sharp eyes and sharper voices of their mothers, straggle out into the middle of the street—little queer-looking images, with which one could fill a score of sketch-books. Look at that urchin yonder in a sailor's jacket, which clothes his stumpy figure from head to foot, after a sort of barrel fashion. He is crowned, too, with a shapeless seal-skin cap of no colour, garnished with a faded ribbon, bearing the "Peace and plenty" motto of some former election. Nor is his sister a whit less picturesque,—that fat child who cries incessantly, pinned up in an old red shawl covering her arms, which stick out, on either side, at right angles,—and who wears an old doll, sans wig, limbs, and eyes, slung about her neck, and a beaver hat and feather, which has served all her nine baby brothers and sisters in turn. Now, too, is the time for observing all the small flirtations which are carried on between clean, clever looking youths in blue coats and gay neckerchiefs, and the maidens who garnish the upper windows, and

who wave favours in reply to their upward nods, at once tender and patronizing. That cart, too, drawn up at the end of the street, is a picture in itself, with its rough old horse, and primitive harness:—you could fancy that it had creaked out of one of Gainsborough's or Moreland's landscapes, even if you took no account of the family party who occupy it,—father, mother, and daughter. They have disposed of their garden stuff, and are sitting upon their empty baskets, possessing their souls in patience, until the Parliament man shall go by, the old man—like Mr. Grogan the common-councilman, having a strong proclivity towards a doze. See,—to show their homely attire, and awkward, but not stupid figures in all the stronger contrast,—a smart knowing-looking sailor lad has stationed himself close to Dobbin's head, and in the intervals between the sufficiently quick discharge of a battery of glances against a rosy lass, (we suspect in a window above our head) entertains himself by perusing the young lady's countenance with a glance more free than it is welcome, as may be seen by her dogged, downcast, conscious

face—for that she is no flirt may be inferred from the particularly rustic cut of her bonnet, and the old maidish disposition of her brown and yellow cotton handkerchief. You may divine that the wearables, aforesaid with her mother's chintz gown, (which reminds one, one knows not why, of the days of Pamela) are reverently laid by all together in some grave looking, antique, oaken chest. You may see how much the old woman is delighted with the innocent ways of the fair white-frocked child, in yonder balcony, who is too young to know the difference between cloth of gold and cloth of frieze, and showers comfits on the party in the cart, out of the abundance of her good will. You can follow the three home to their quiet cottage, a dozen miles hence, and listen to their slow shrewd talk—

“How fine the folk were dressed!—and how the member took off his hat to our Peggy—and how he was nothing to look at, after all—and what a power of money his chair must have cost him!”

But the cry is—“They come!”—Hark!—the roar of distant cheering—the sudden ex-

hilarating burst of the trumpets and drums—and again their increasing clangour as the show advances! You can now see, in the distance, a vista of gay streamers—a sea of people marching hitherward, and, whenever the wind wafts the flags a little aside, something which at this distance, looks not unlike a splendid Twelfth cake, surmounted by its monarch.—Fie!—that we dare compare our member in his chair, to a child of the oven!—and yet we would rather be that cake and that king, to be abandoned to the tender mercies of little masters and misses, in all the keenness of their holiday hunger,—than standing the place of him who is kissing his hand and bowing so fervently, and think that this ceremonial is—only the threshold to the wear and tear of a session in the House of Commons.

* * * * *

Can I bring my book to a close at a more auspicious moment, than amid the cheerings of a merry multitude, and the swell of triumphant music? Surely this is the time for saying farewell to the gentle and discreet public. Should what I have written find any favour in

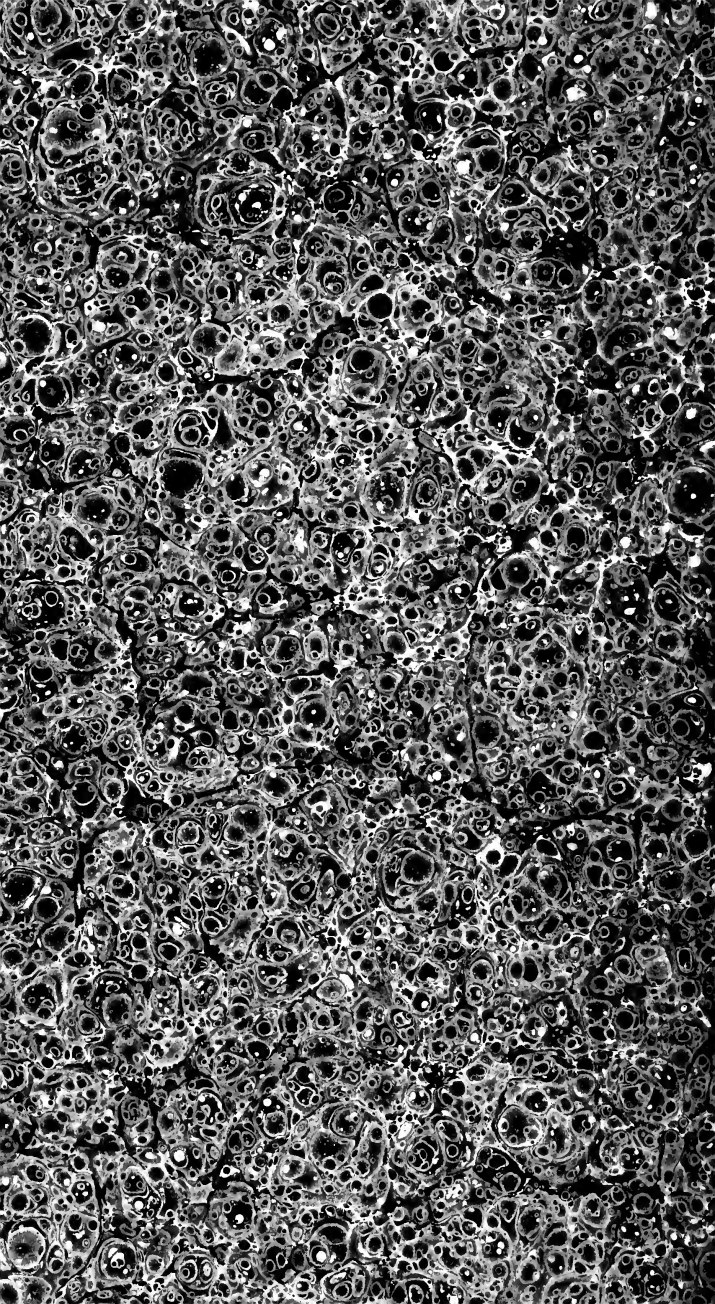
the eyes of the world of critics and readers, I shall feel myself a happier man than that chaired member, and apply myself, with eager pleasure, to the production of some other work, more worthy, I hope, of their good opinion.

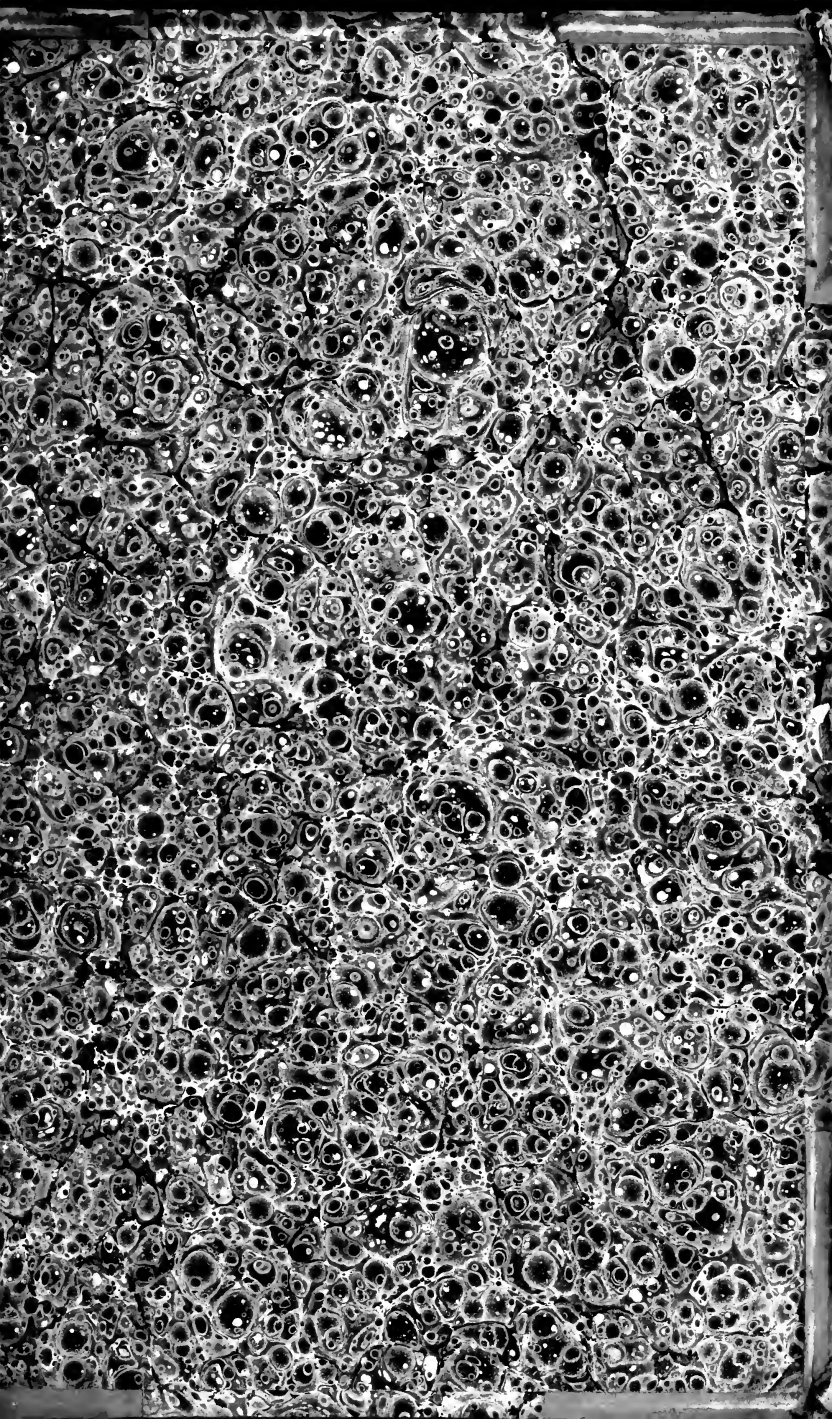
THE END.

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